THEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION FOR SOCIAL URBAN MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

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The context is Majority Missionary Baptist Church, in Florence, South Carolina, a congregation of 500 members. The problem was some members became disengaged in social ministry. Subsequently, unemployment is high, and crime rampant. To address the problems, the author implemented theological education to enhance all members' spirituality for transformative development. As a result, congregants became, compassionately, mobilized for ecumenical and inclusive ministry to address social injustice. Treatments were: six week sessions: workshops, Bible groups, and effective sermons. The methodology used was administering qualitative pretest and post-tests, and the expected outcome was an attitudinal change and adoption of a social program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My philosophical and theological aspiration in life has always been to have a clearer understanding of God and Creation. As I recall from my childhood, the topic of discussions at home and at family functions was always biblical. At the age of eight, Sunday School became very interesting to me, so I yearned to know more about God and creation. As a result of attending church regularly and sitting under the tutelage of my uncle, the late Reverend A.L. Brown and other church leaders, I was privileged to learn more about the Christian Faith. Through this experience, my theological understanding derived from biblical teaching. As a Christian disciple, I have gained a clearer understanding of the Bible and of God's love for the human race. My understanding of God's love is revealed through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who entered into human history to reconcile a fallen humanity.

I believe original sin is the fall of man, which resulted in God's redemptive plan manifested through the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus Christ entered into human history, and after thirty-three years, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, on the third day Jesus Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence Jesus Christ shall come to judge the quick and the dead. According to the Nicene Creed, I personally believe the Deity of Christ by the Grace of God and the Holy Spirit is to be celebrated by Believers as a sign of God's tangible and spiritual works. This is a testimony of God's infinite wisdom, power and love. God has offered to all Believers grace and mercy, forgiveness of sin, for reconciliation and salvation.

As a servant of Jesus Christ, I have no adequate words to express my heartfelt gratitude for God's loving kindness and tender mercies. There are times when I feel unworthy of God's Love; however, as I continue to strive for spiritual maturity, I'm humbled to never take God's grace for granted. My determination is to strive for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus as a faithful servant.

I take this opportunity to thank God for my loving wife, Mrs. Lois Darlene Porter of forty years, for her faithful love and commitment to me. To our children, Tyrra S. Porter, Kerry A. Porter, The Reverend Maurice S. Porter, LaToya R. Porter, and Stephanie J. Porter, thank you for being good children, I love you. To my faithful and loving typist, Mrs. Carolyn Alston Howard, thank you very much for your tireless dedication as we labored with this project. I am forever grateful and much love to you. To Mr. Louis Regi James, thank you for your dedicated technical support. To my associates, Reverend Eric Baldwin, Attorney Vernee C. Hancock, Reverend Mishael E. Miller, Mrs. Lucille Windom, Ms. Mary Cusack, to the Honorable Stephen J. Wukela, Councilwoman Theresa Myers Ervin, to The Reverend Dr. Andre Ivy, The Reverend Dr. Derrick Thorpe, The Reverend Dr. Eddie J. Flemings, Dr. Shirley Gamble; to my Mentors: Dr. Terry Thomas, Dr. Reginald Dawkins, Dr. Ricky Woods; and my entire peer group, thank you for your expertise and compassion in sharing your support for this project.

To Majority Missionary Baptist Church, thank you for supporting me during my absence from you while achieving this project. For that I am forever thankful! To the members of the United Methodist Church whom I have had the pleasure of pastoring: Wesley and Salem, located in Florence, South Carolina during my Undergraduate studies at Claflin University, Orangeburg, South Carolina; the Summerville Parish, which includes Campbell Hill, Murray and Wesley in Summerville, South Carolina during my Masters of Divinity at Erskine Theological Seminary, in

Due West, South Carolina; and to the South Carolina United Methodist Conference, thank you. A special thank you to the late Bishop Joseph Bethea for his compassionate love and guidance for pastoral ministry. To my Brothers of the United Methodist Clergy, Elder Matthew C. Brown, Reverend Jonathan Brown, Jr., Elder John Dicks, The Reverend Rufus Lee Wilson and my Brothers in the Baptist Church, Reverend Dr. Ralph W. Canty, The Reverend Dr. Mack Hines, and The Reverend Dr. Waymon Munford, thank you for your prayers and support.

Last, but certainly not least, my entire family, who are far too many to name, thank you for your life long support and love. We have endured so much heartache and pain, but through it all, the Love of God and the patriarchs of our family taught us that a family that prays together will stay together. Thank God for our grandparents, the late Arthur and Julia Brayboy Brown. The lessons of family love that they taught us must be preserved and honored as a memorial of their Christian love for us.

PREFACE

Theological Transformation for Social Urban Ministries focuses upon the political and socio-economic needs in the inner city. The increasing rate of citizens being disenfranchised from the American dream is not a new problem. History reflects for centuries, that imperialism, capitalism, and totalitarianism make it almost impossible for equality and justice for all; therefore, to overcome injustice, God has always had freedom fighters such as: Socrates of Athens, Gandhi of India, Martin Luther of Germany, Arthur Wellesley, Douglas MacArthur, Nelson Mandela of Africa, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King of America, Moses, God's liberator for Israel, and Jesus Christ of Nazareth who were all utilitarian liberators. These freedom fighters stood on the principles of love and equality for all humanity. This school of thought influenced the author's presupposition for Theological Transformation for Social Urban Ministry and Social Justice.

As an African American male, the author is a product of the inner city who has witnessed the struggles of not only his people, but all minorities, including the poor. As a child reared in the Newark, New Jersey urban community in 1965, he witnessed the destructive results of riots, homes burned, and stores looted. There was police brutality and people were killed because of the injustice that poisoned the local political community. Growing up, his world view was the war in Vietnam, the hippie movement, Cassius Clay (Ali), Motown, the Beatles, the Civil Rights Movement and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. The political atmosphere was partial toward the rich who could avoid the draft, while the poor was

drafted into the Armed Forces or imprisoned for avoiding the draft. To add insult to injury, many of his relatives who served faithfully in the Vietnam War returned home to the bureaucracy of politics and lack of employment. The more things change, the more they remain the same.

What the author learned from this is to not be angry with our political system, because politics is the science of government. Politics is not a bad thing, but unfortunately, there are some bad politicians. Forty years later, by the grace of God, renaissance has given new birth to Newark where he attended church and gained his theological formation. Ironically, his first pastoral position was at Shiloh Baptist Church, Newark, New Jersey where he witnessed all of the destruction as a child.

This project was designed to theologically educate and equip citizens for political and social justice. As a result, the author truly believed that the positive outcome would not only benefit the urban community, but the entire country.

DEDICATION

This project is affectionately dedicated to my mother, the late Mrs. Vera Ann Brown Porter, my father, the late Mr. Albert Porter, to my sister, the late Mrs. Alberta Porter McGuire, my grandparents, the late Mr. Arthur and Mrs. Julia Brown, my brother, the late Mr. Frankie Porter, my uncle, the late Deacon Leroy Brown, my beloved cousin, the late Deacon Malachi Brown, my father-in-law, the late Mr. Ulysses J. Dixon and to my brother-in-law, the late Mr. Robert Dixon. To my loving wife, Mrs. Lois Porter, and to my children, Tyrra, Kerry, Maurice, LaToya and Stephanie. To my grandchildren, much love from "Pop Pop" and to the most wonderful mother-in-law in the world, Mrs. Leatha Mae Langley Dixon. And of course, last but not least, Shiloh Baptist Church, Newark, New Jersey, Salem United Methodist and Wesley United Methodist Churches, Florence, South Carolina, Campbell Hill United Methodist, Murray United Methodist, Wesley United Methodist Churches, Summerville, South Carolina and Majority Missionary Baptist Church, Florence, South Carolina.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSX - - Chesapeake /Seaboard/X Railroad Corporation

HIV / AIDS -- Human immunodeficiency virus infection / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

HPRP - Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program

HUD - U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

HMIS - Homeless Management Information Systems

Hwy - Highway

MMBC - Majority Missionary Baptist Church

Ô n î - Suffering that can be observed, in particular, that which gains the attention of God.

TULIP - Total, Inability, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Infallible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.

YHWH -- Hebrew name of GOD

INTRODUCTION

The need for theological and social change in the urban community of Florence, South Carolina was the focus of this project. The author's primary goal was to educate the members of Majority Missionary Baptist Church to become more visible and more active in West Florence and the greater community.

We believe there is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. In unity of this Godhead, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were jointed together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

In the Majority Missionary Baptist Church, we believe that all people are people of worth in the sight of God and through obedience to God very person in the church has been given gifts that are responsible for effective ministry. I Corinthians 12 speaks of the diversities of gifts; therefore, we do not hire ministers to do the work of ministry; we hire staff to train and encourage our congregations to contribute in the ministry of the church. Based upon the biblical principles the church must ecumenically and inclusively minister to the church universal. We must never lose sight of the Apostle Paul's instructions concerning apostles, prophets,

evangelists, and pastors-teachers exist for the "equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:12, states, the work of the pastor is to equip the congregation for the active involvement God has called each of them to do.

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

Our Mission is to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ by meeting people at their point of growth. Majority Missionary Baptist church sands continually in need of doctrinal reinvigoration for the sake of authentic renewal, fruitful evangelism, and ecumenical dialogue. In this light, the recovery and updating of our distinctive doctrinal heritage-catholic, evangelical, and reformed – is essential. The author holds the position to fulfill the great commission, we must engage in relevant ministries in the West Florence community to achieve theological transformation for social change in the urban community.

To accomplish this endeavor, Majority Missionary Baptist Church partnered with faith based ministries such as: The Harvest of Hope Food Bank, The Kid's Café, The Sisters Cancer Awareness Program, Transitional Home for Domestic Violence and Teenage Pregnancy Awareness, HIV Awareness, The Kingdom Academy via the Florence County School District and other churches in the greater Florence community.

This project was designed to theologically educate and equip citizens for political and social justice. Chapter one addressed the contextual challenges and needs by developing a

theological formation for transformation by meeting people at their point of growth to become more productive and proactive citizens within the urban community.

Chapter two developed a hypothesis to treat the contextual problems and reviewed the data from scholarly sources. This information equipped participants in the development of workshops to by providing the necessary information needed to engage in transformative learning. This chapter addressed the positive and negative reactions of the changes necessary for the adoption of a social program that focused on some of the issues in the West Florence community.

The Old and New Testament scriptures were the focus of chapter three which confirms that biblical teachings are the primary source to confirm God's creative work, beginning with God's relationship with Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sara, along with Moses and the liberation of Israel from bondage to freedom. The New Testament focused on Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of all humanity and for ministry of liberation of all people.

The historical analysis focused on the injustice and oppression of people who were victims of imperialism, capitalism, and social prejudice. The contemporary analysis addressed liberators whom God empowered to assist those who dealt with discrimination throughout the world. The theological foundation addressed the link between the Old Testament and New Testament that are relevant in society today. Biblically, God's Word concerning humanity confirms the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit for faithful believers.

In chapter four, participants were given official data to develop effective programs which addressed the social and political issues in the context of urban communities. Further, this chapter illustrated the methodology and procedures that outlined the pros and cons using

qualitative strategies. Sessions involving pre and post personal responsive questionnaires were given to confirm the overall outcome for moving forward in achieving the common goal.

Chapter five, explained the field experience activities that were implemented as participants engaged in the developmental project. Experiences were varied based on the needs of the people in different segments of the urban community.

In chapter six the author addressed spiritual wholeness for a psychological and more intimate relationship with ones-self, God and community of faith, and transformed his congregants to move beyond their brokenness and strive to achieve theological transformation for social urban ministry. The chapter focused on the author's reflections, summary, conclusion and the implementation of the development of the project. The attitude and enthusiasm of participants was the catalyst for the overall success of achieving a positive outcome.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Alfonso Porter, the first son of ten children of the late Albert and Vera Ann Brown Porter, was born in Johnsonville, South Carolina. At the age of three, his mother relocated to Paterson, New Jersey where he attended the New Jersey Public School System. Alfonso Porter has always been affectionately known as "AP" by his family.

During the first three years of his childhood, he was reared by his grandparents in South Carolina on a rural farm. His grandfather, the late Arthur Brown, and grandmother, Julia Brayboy Brown, were sharecroppers. AP's earliest remembrance during his formative years as a child was going out to the barn with his grandmother to milk the cow. He plainly recalls his grandmother carrying a bucket, a stool and a towel. With curious eyes, he watched his grandmother take a towel and clean the cow. As she sat on the stool, and placed the bucket beneath the cow, she began the milking. He can still, in his mind, hear the sound of the milk, going into the bucket.

AP recalls his grandparent's house having a long front porch where his grandfather would sit early in the morning with a basin to wash his face and shave. There was a long road from the house leading to the main road and he walked that road with his granddaddy to get to the mailbox. That was fun! There was the village model that existed with a close family unit in a faithful Methodist Episcopal Community. These were significant memories that still linger in his mind. It is amazing, with all of the experiences life has offered over the years, they do not

compare to those pleasurable memories. His fondest include family reunions and many fun-filled church activities. In everything that he and his family did, there was love and respect for everyone. He took this same love and respect for others with him when it was time to leave his grandparents and relocate to New Jersey with his mother.

Leaving them was a painful memory, and he vaguely remembers his grandparents not wanting them to leave South Carolina because New Jersey appeared to be a dangerous place for AP and his sister, Alberta. When AP moved with his mother and sister to New Jersey, they lived in an apartment building, on the fourth floor, where there were strangers from different cultures and folk did not seem to be very friendly. He recalls his mother informing him and his sister, "Don't talk to strangers!" His mother was very protective because she was a single parent at this time, and she realized the responsibility of rearing and caring for him and Alberta. There was the constant reminder of AP's grandparents telling his mother that, "the children should not be up North!" She convinced her parents that the children would get a better education in New Jersey, and her brothers and sisters would help care for them.

At the age of four, AP recalls his mother taking him and his older sister, Alberta, to register for school. Another painful memory was going to the Health Department to get his vaccination and shots. He wondered why he had to be at this place. Children were crying, and there were nurses with long needles, cotton balls, and alcohol were all over the place. He wanted his sister to get her shot first, she did, three years earlier. He remembers the nurses giving lollipops to help ease the pain of those terrible shots. That is when he realized he was a person. This impact taught him the difference between pain, right and wrong, and understanding that people have consequences in life. His mother, at that moment, became the most influential person in his life. He just did not understand why he had to get that shot!

The highlight of his life came into fruition when his mother informed him that his grandparents were relocating to Paterson, New Jersey. At that time, AP was so happy, excited and thankful to be reunited with his granddaddy and grandma. It was just like being in South Carolina, again. He could hardly wait to hang with his grandfather every day and eat from his grandma's cake bowls. Like old times, family members would come by every Thursday night as well as attend church on Sunday. Good ole days!

In the fall, AP began school and established relationships with different people who were just like him and many of them became his friends. His school teacher, Mrs. Beckett, was pretty and friendly. She was a role model, and he still remembers her pretty smile. While in the third grade, AP recalls having a lead role in the school play. The auditorium was filled with his peers, his mother was there, and it was a really good experience. It was then that AP's mother realized that he had a certain gift for public speaking.

During his primary years, AP was very involved in the Sunday School Department at his church. His mother was his first Sunday School teacher. When he was eight years old and his sister was twelve, he recalls his mother teaching them their Easter speeches. She would go over their speeches with them several times and then she would ask them, "Do you know your part now?" He lied and said, "yes." AP did not realize that his mother was going to challenge him that very moment. Before he knew it, she reached back, got her strap and said, "Now you read!" AP would not encourage this today, because he is sure that child psychologists or the Department of Social Service would not approve this method to develop good reading skills; however, it was very effective as far as he is concerned. There are memories that linger from that experience.

Specifically, on that Easter Sunday Morning, when his Sunday School class was called to recite their speeches, he did not know his part and he spoke so low that no one could hear him.

After blundering through that Easter speech, he cast his eyes over toward his mother. She signaled him to come to her, and told him to sit down beside her. She whispered in his ear, "When I get you home, the next time you get up to speak, you will do it right!" He has been doing public speaking ever since**,** and loudly enough for people to hear. It was this experience that taught him, how serious his mother was about their spiritual development. Although they were poor, they were rich in spirit. His mother constantly instilled that in them. She would say, "Hold your head up, be proud, you are a child of God!" When other relatives were blessed to have the finer things in life, his mother had a way of always encouraging them that "things" do not always bring true happiness. She would say, "It's what's in your heart, not what's on your back; it's how you live and not where you live." Little did he know, his mother was instilling in him the teachings of Jesus to govern his moral conduct. How did this affect him? It had a positive and profound impact on the rest of his life.

During earlier years, AP was greatly influenced by his grandfather's guidance, as well as his mother; however, his grandfather was the primary male figure in his life. In fact, AP would refer to his granddaddy as his daddy. His grandfather taught him ethics, etiquette, independence, how to shine his shoes, to always keep a clean handkerchief and always have keep money in his pocket. He only kept a quarter, but it was money.

AP constantly referred to his granddaddy as daddy until one day his mother adamantly set the record straight. She told AP, "Your grandfather is not your daddy because I am not your sister!" That took care of that!

At the age of eight, AP recalls a mysterious man visiting their home. This man made AP feel uncomfortable. There was something within AP's spirit that did not feel quite right. It was perplexing because his sister, Alberta, was happy to see this man, and his mother appeared to be

happy as well. AP wondered what was going on here. Alberta received a new watch. Mom was acting giddyish. He had never seen this man before in his entire life. Confused, AP left and went next door to his grandparent's house, only to be called back by his mother to meet this stranger. AP recalls his mother asking: "Do you know who this man is?" He said "No!" Then, she said, "This is your father." He was dumbfounded. All he knew was that it did not feel right. He did not like him, immediately, and there was a sense that the man did not like AP, either. After all, AP did not get a watch, only Alberta. Shortly after that, AP ran next door and told his grandparents what was going on, and his granddaddy said, "That's Albert Porter! I don't know what Vera Ann sees in him! The devil is busy!"

The only thing AP could do at the tender age of eight was to go along with the madness. It was awful! Seemingly, all the joy between Alberta and AP changed. Albert always favored her, and then to add insult to injury, Albert expected AP to call him 'daddy.' AP remembered the words that he shared with his mother earlier, "Granddaddy is my daddy, Arthur Brown, not Albert Porter." From this point forward, with Albert in the house, the lifestyle of the family changed. He would drink, use perverse language, beat the children, and disrespect AP's mother. AP wanted to beat him up, but he was all of eighty pounds and Albert was about 250 pounds. Further, his mother was complacent with Albert's behavior. His grandparents were devastated with his mother's behavior because of the domestic violence. AP just wanted to run away! It was a house from hell! Everything was fine when Albert was not around. They always feared him because he was mean, surly, and unpredictable. AP did not know if it was the vodka, the cigarettes, or something else, but it was awful. As time passed, things only got worse.

AP remembers his grandmother getting seriously ill, and she passed away. It was devastating! He did not understand why God would allow his grandmother to die. In his mind, he

always thought of God as a protector. It was his grandmother who taught him to trust in God and He will take care of you and now she was dead and gone! Gone too soon! AP remembers Mr. Braggs, the Funeral Director, coming to the house in a shiny black car. He was tall, well dressed, but he looked scary, and dealt with dead people. AP had a phobia about it, but he just did not know what it was called then. Scared and confused worked for him.

He recalls the funeral of his grandmother. It was on a rainy Thursday afternoon at Unity Methodist Episcopal Church in Paterson, New Jersey. All of his family members were crying, including his mother and her sisters and brothers were bereaved. AP wanted to console his mother, but the children were not seated with the adults. He felt like it was
the end of the world, because it was the first time AP saw his grandfather in tears and he recalls thinking, "Why Almighty God, did you let my grandmother die?" As AP reflected, Granddaddy was his hero; he raised him and his sister. He was always there for his grandma and people always came to him for help. This time, there was no one to help him and AP was not allowed to go to him. This was the first time in AP's life that he experienced the pain of loss, hopelessness and despair. Where is God now?

After the funeral, things got worse, because his mother and the rest of her siblings and granddaddy all traveled to South Carolina to bury his grandmother and AP was left in Paterson with Albert. Oh Lord! That was a weekend from hell! AP was so happy when his mother returned from South Carolina. Hopefully now, they would have some sense of normalcy around their house, because it certainly was not a home in his mother's absence. Shortly after AP's grandmother's death, his grandfather relocated to the other side of town because his uncles knew that his grandfather did not condone domestic violence toward his daughter, Vera Ann. The purpose of the relocation was to protect him from getting into an altercation with her husband,

Albert. AP was brokenhearted. He could no longer go next door and he was not old enough to walk to his grandfather's new house. Furthermore, Albert was so strict he did not want AP's mother or his children to have contact on a regular basis with his mother's family.

Being the oldest boy, AP felt that he was totally responsible now, for the safety of his mother and siblings. His granddaddy taught him to always be the man of the house. After all, he was his mother's only son for eight years. With granddaddy having moved, Albert relocated their family to 18 Dale Avenue, Paterson, New Jersey. It was a nice house, but AP knew a house in its best disguise did not make a home. It was at this address that one of the most awful things happened in AP's life. He walked into his mother's room to find her very ill, and the ambulance came and they took his mother to St. Joseph's Hospital. She suffered from a broken heart. To add insult to injury, AP recalls overhearing his mother's siblings saying negative things about his mother. But his granddaddy, quickly, put them in their place and told them that he did not want to hear those negative comments about their sister, not another time.

When AP's grandfather tried to convince Vera Ann to leave Albert, he told her that Albert was no good, but she loved him. After his mother was discharged from the hospital and returned home, things were alright for a little while, but then trouble showed up again! During that same year AP's grandfather suffered a major aneurism and he never recovered. AP's world was turned upside down, once again, and Mr. Braggs, the Funeral Director, arrived to make the burial arrangements for his grandfather's home going. This time, AP came to South Carolina for the Home Going Service.

Upon returning back to Paterson, New Jersey, nothing was the same without grandma and granddaddy; the family unit as AP knew it, was over. Relatives began to relocate to difference states; there were unexpected divorces and everything changed. AP's life was in a

state of devastation. There was so much uncertainty about his future. His mother was still in an abusive relationship, things just seemed hopeless. Then AP realized he had to fend for himself and try to protect his mother and siblings, somehow. The one thing that kept AP from falling into an unlawful lifestyle, was the early teachings of his grandparents and his mother which was 'Remember the Golden Rule.' He never thought that one person could cause so much pain. The strange thing was that he felt sorry for Albert, he tried to get along with him, but it was only a temporary fix. He and his father, so he was told, had nothing in common. The harder he tried, the worse things got. AP even tried calling him daddy, but it did not feel right, because it was not right.

AP realized then that God did exist because he had nothing else and no one else to depend on and though he did not understand why, he knew in his soul that God was real. In spite of all of these difficult issues, AP tried his very best to do well in school, but he struggled. Lacking the one on one attention that his mother gave him earlier in life, and the distractions within the home with younger siblings made studying difficult. Sometimes, the lights would be turned off, his mother would worry about food, and AP continued to feel that it was his responsibility to help take care of his mother and siblings. AP learned early how to earn money: he sold newspapers, did landscaping, shoveled snow, did handy man work, like painting, shining shoes and he would always take his earnings to his mother. Unfortunately, AP's priorities changed. Money became more important than school. He continued to attended school, but his focus was not on academics, rather, how to make an honest dollar. Living in the inner city, there was the temptation of drugs, alcohol, and robbery, but AP was afraid to engage in any unlawful acts. So, he made friends with police officers and firemen, who became some of his best customers. AP was well known and respected as a young lad in the community.

AP always liked nice things. He saw some lamps that he liked in Eastern Furniture Store, so he decided that he would buy them for his mother. AP was ten years old then and he knew the owner of the store, so he negotiated with the owner for those lamps for a total cost of thirty-five ($35.00) dollars. He put them on layaway, and made weekly payments from his earnings from working chores. When he got to the last seven ($7.00) dollars due, Ben, the store owner, said, that the ladies in the accounting office were so impressed with AP, that they paid his balance. AP was overwhelmed with joy, taking those lamps home to his mother. Unfortunately, the electricity was off, but they were still nice lamps. He recalls how his mother's eyes lit up, it was a good day. His mother told her sisters about the new lamps. They were all proud of AP and it felt good to see his mother happy again. Unfortunately, Albert was not impressed and not long thereafter, he and AP's mom got into an altercation and the lamps were broken. In his heart and in his mind, he said, you cannot have anything nice around here. He was beginning to think like his mother's siblings, she did not have to stay in an abusive marriage. He was angry with her for not leaving, but what could he do? He began thinking, save yourself! Fortunately, this did not have a devastating effect on AP to the point where he gave up. He knew inside himself that he had to keep persevering. He felt alone, had no one he could really talk to, no one knew what he was feeling, and he just wanted to get away. That is when he realized that love is painful, it was a catch twenty-two. Despite all of the negativity he experienced, AP was able to use his inner strength and move forward, focusing on his school work, and graduating elementary school.

In the fall, AP attended John F. Kennedy High School. He was excited, since it was a new beginning with students from across the city attending the school. The school was beautiful, modern and there were numerous activities. AP decided to get involved with the music department, which gave him an opportunity to embellish his God given musical talent. There was

the marching band, basketball games, the football team, and AP thoroughly enjoyed all of these activities. It was a different atmosphere than his elementary years with new opportunities. It was his responsibility to honor his schedule and attend each class. His first two years of high school were great. He felt the sky was the limit until troubles surfaced at home again. Domestic violence just would not go away, and so AP decided that he would stand up to defend his mother and himself only to have Albert put him out the house.

Now, in the midst of all of this uncertainty, he is sixteen and homeless. He felt lost, no home, it was dark and the streets were dangerous. His grandfather was no longer there, so he decided to go to his Aunt Maggie Lee's house. Aunt Maggie Lee was his mother's older sister. She understood AP's circumstances and allowed him to stay with her family. However, he had to pay rent of ten dollars a week. With this being the case, AP had to do what was necessary and school was not at the top of the list. His attendance declined, grades fell, and AP decided that he would just go to night school and work at his Aunt Christine's restaurant. His aunts encouraged him to go to school, but he just did not have the drive.

At the age of sixteen, AP was concerned about racism and injustice. His world view was influenced by the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, Hippies, Rock and Roll, promiscuous conduct, alcohol, drugs, and riots in the inner city. This was his worldview. Young and confused, he tried to understand the things he was taught in church. He tried to understand the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag: 'One Nation Under God', everything seemed contradictory, and the traditional life style was a thing of the past. He was just totally perplexed. Family break downs resulting in divorce, and family members relocating to other states, it was a different world from the good memories of the days in South Carolina where he lived in a very protective community and everything seemed fine.

At the age of seventeen, AP was informed that he would be a father. He immediately accepted the responsibility and was blessed with a construction job that paid him eight ($8.00) dollars an hour. The money was great and AP took the initiative to maintain his integrity to support his daughter, Tyrra, and her mother, Lois. At eighteen years old, AP was a dad because abortion was not an option, although, he did not fully understand the consequences of the role of "father." AP was greatly influenced by the Bible and the teachings of the church which impacted as well as shaped his philosophy for life. Little did he know, God was preparing him for ministry! AP's conscious told him it was not about him; it was about doing the right thing which included taking care of his daughter, so he decided to join the United States Army.

AP was stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey for basic training. Upon completion of basic training, he was transferred to Scofield Barracks in Hawaii, 6,000 miles away from home. Wow! This blew AP's mind, eighteen years old, and he was on the other side of the world. He was overwhelmed about who he was, where he was, and the only thing that looked familiar was the sky. He never thought racism and injustice was prevalent in the United States Army. The only thing that kept him sane was the teachings of his grandparents and his mother. It was the Bible, his music and his faith in God that kept him grounded. He wanted to prove to his family that he could do better, but 6,000 miles away, he thought to himself, they do not know if I am doing better or worse. One thing he realized, it was better than dealing with the domestic violence at home. Then AP began to reassess his childhood and his family. Furthermore, he missed his baby daughter, Tyrra, whom he cherished. His sincere desire to return home successfully was paramount. AP made the best of his tour in Hawaii. He was able to support his daughter and Lois. While speaking with his mother, the right thing to do for Tyrra and Lois, was discussed, so AP decided to come home on leave and propose to Lois. She said, "Yes." This was great! Lois

was very beautiful, very loving and intelligent. AP felt in his heart that this was the right thing to do. His main focus now, was to live a Godly life and mimic his grandfather who in his eyes was 'the ideal man.'

After an Honorable Discharge from active duty, he returned home to New Jersey and served in the New Jersey National Guard. Believe it or not, seemingly, Albert was mellowing then. AP worked in construction, made a decent living, and was content because he felt that time brought about a change between his mother and father. His siblings had matured, and things seemed rather stable. His mother worked at the Salvation Army Store as a manager and she was active in her church. Surprisingly, Albert would go to church with her sometimes. AP thought to himself, as long as there is life, there is hope. He and Albert became cordial. That was all AP ever wanted, but he still would not call him Daddy since it just did not feel right. All of his siblings, called Albert Daddy. It sounded right when they said it, because it was right; however, it just was not right for AP, Why? Something in AP's soul, something deep within his spirit, just could not and would not allow him to accept Albert as his biological father. They had nothing in common, inside or outside, that would confirm their relationship of father and son. But that was fine, AP did not have to live with him now. He was married, had his own apartment, a wife, a daughter, and a son, Kerry, the perfect family.

AP finally decided that he needed to return to school, so he re-enrolled to school, earned his high school equivalency diploma, which opened the door for him to attend Electronics School at Rets, in Nutley, New Jersey. After completion of this program, he worked as an electronic representative for Savin Corporation for twelve years. Seven years after attending electronic school, AP and his wife were blessed with their second son, Maurice.

At the age of twenty-five, AP accepted Christ in his life. It was a Sunday morning when AP had taken his daughter, Tyrra, to attend church with his mother, that he experienced a spiritual conscious awakening. There was a conscience within that informed him, “I have work for you to do in ministry.” It was then that AP’s entire life in a moment, like a panoramic picture, flashed through his mind and all of a sudden everything that happened in his life, seemed to make sense. It was then that AP realized that this calling was from the Lord, and he accepted in a very humble and gracious manner, with a sense of feeling unworthy, yet, willing to accept the Call of God. He realized as a boy, that God was love and in the midst of trials and tribulations and perplexities, he could always talk to God, even if God did not talk back, but this time God did speak. Amen.

This was a significant moment in AP’s life. All of the events that had ever happened in his life that he recalls were now put in perspective. The impact has affected and has transformed negative events that had overshadowed his life for so long into an opportunity to minister. AP realized all things work together for good, he didn’t know that theologically, but he felt a sense of love and forgiveness was the right thing to do, because there were many things in his life that were not right in the sight of God. It’s amazing, as a boy, AP was taught, remember the Golden Rule and deep within his physic those early lessons spoke volumes.

AP’s first challenge as a minister, after his conversion was to make amends with Albert, because he hated him. AP came to realized that there were times that God was not pleased with his actions. Now being a minister, AP realized that he had to love everybody unconditionally and Albert was somebody. When Albert found out about AP’s calling, believe it or not, he respected him; that was strange, he thought Albert wanted him to become a thug. You see, Albert was known in the community as a tough guy, in fact his street name was “Pluck.” AP was amazed

that his mother was more at peace and she said to him: “You know time brings about a change and Albert, has changed.” AP realized as a minister that Albert was not as tough as he once was, he was not as big and strong, his back began to bow in age, his hair was grey and thin and he suffered with diabetes. AP wanted to bury all of the bad memories, so one day he asked Albert, why was he so mean to them and especially him? Albert replied very sincerely with tears in his eyes “that’s the way I was raised.” After that, AP prayed with him, his mother was teary eyed, and from that day forward AP and Albert made amends.

Now AP realized it was time to move forward in ministry. He had to discover who he was and who he had to become. Spiritually AP’s conversion gave him the spiritual insight to take up the yoke of God’s Word. There was the thirst and hunger for knowledge, so AP decided to return to school for theology. He felt a very strong need to learn more about God’s Will in his life. As a result, his mother and grandparents influence was the foundation of his spiritual formation and Christian Faith. After much prayer and pastoral counseling, with the support of his wife Lois, he decided to accept God’s Call into Ministry.

At this time in AP’s life, a significant event took place, unexpectedly. He was informed by his aunt that Albert was not his biological father, and he should ask his mother and possibly she would talk openly with him about this subject. He reluctantly, carefully, and prayerfully approached his mother with this matter. Wow! His mother said to him, “I remember your saying that Albert and you do not have a father and son relationship or anything in common. That’s because Albert is not your biological father. Your aunt called me and told me that you were inquiring and she told you that you should come to me. Haven’t I told you that if you wanted to know anything, you talk to me?” Then there was silence! Then his mother told him about his father and she said, “Albert may have his ways, but your daddy was just sorry! I want you to

have the opportunity to meet your father and I feel that you are mature enough now to handle this. But don't get your hopes up." AP did though**.** It was an exciting discovery. The mystery of all these years, and having a gut instinct that Albert was not his biological father gave AP the satisfaction that, now, the truth was known. He went and told Lois, and they prepared to drive to Washington, DC to meet his dad, Lister Wilder. He appeared to be a nice soft spoken guy. They spent time together and he said that he would look forward to getting to know AP, his wife and grandchildren. Things appeared to go well for about a year and then Lister Wilder pulled away. AP felt as if he was imposing so he decided to withdraw and see if his biological father would cultivate their relationship. He did not! It was then that AP realized that you cannot make someone love you. It is a God given gift and his mother was right. After this, AP decided that he had tried and had done his part, so he decided to 'live and let live' and let bygones be bygones!

By the grace of God, AP was able to continue to grow in ministry faithfully and things were going really well for AP, spiritually and economically. Seven years later, they had another daughter, LaToya and eighteen months later, their daughter Stephanie was born.

AP joined the Shiloh Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey under the pastoral leadership of Elder E. W. Wallace who served as his mentor. Under Elder Wallace's leadership and the support of his family and church congregation, he was blessed to complete his educational requirements. With this blessing, he was ordained and appointed pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, and elected President of the Baptist Union Meeting Association of the Primitive Baptist Church of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, Inc.

In 1992, AP joined the South Carolina United Methodist Conference, under the leadership of the late Bishop Joseph Bethea. He was blessed with the opportunity to pursue Full Conference Membership into Ordained Ministry and was appointed pastor of Salem and Wesley

United Methodist Churches on the Florence District as a Student Pastor. During his tenure there, he was blessed to attend Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religion and Philosophy in 2002 and became a member of Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society**.**

AP was excited at this point in his life, he was furthering his theological education, and things were going well at home with his mother and Albert. AP would talk with his mother on a regular basis and surprisingly with Albert, as well. Things were good between Albert and him. One Sunday evening after church, he received a phone call from his mother and his sister, Alberta informing him that Albert had died. He was speechless, shocked and hurt to hear of his death. He made plans to go to New Jersey to be with his mother and family to make preparations for Albert's Home Going Service. AP had the responsibility of delivering the Eulogy. Upon returning to South Carolina, he began to reflect and God spoke to his heart and said, "All is well, you've done your part!" His main concern now was making certain that things were well with his mother. He tried convincing her to relocate to South Carolina to live with him and his family. She said, "Boy, I'm not going back to South Carolina, I've had my share of South Carolina. I'll be just fine right here in Paterson, New Jersey." He knew then that she meant what she said, after all Paterson was now home for her. His siblings were there, her family was there and she had established herself as a store manager at the Salvation Army. He realized the importance of continuing his education and successfully completed the United Methodist Candidacy Studies at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia in 1997.

In the last year of school, however, AP's life had a terrible jolt! His mother and nine members of her family were traveling to South Carolina to attend Uncle Jonathan Brown's funeral. Alberta was driving, and they were involved in a terrible accident. His mother and four

other members of her family were killed. AP was devastated! It still seems surreal! Did this thing really happen! It all seems like a long nightmare. AP recalls clearly the following night, sitting alone in his living room, contemplating, why? While his sister Alberta, Aunt Mary, and Aunt Jean who survived the accident were sleeping, he looked in the room to just check on them and he thought to himself, this is not a dream, here is living proof, survivors of the accident. As he sat quietly alone, he heard again the same conscience that called him into ministry saying, "God is ready to have audience with you. Within his psychic he said, Lord, I love you and I dare not question you, just give me strength to survive and take care of my family." The conscience voice then responded, God wants discussion with you. AP said, "Lord, I dare not question you because when Job did, he got reprimanded." So, that voice-less voice again said, you really need to share your soul with God, so AP very humbly thought, Lord I realize that we all have an appointed time, but why did my mother and other loved ones have to die such a brutal death? And the Lord responded to him, and said, "So you think it was brutal? No Calvary, the Crucifixion of my Son Jesus Christ was brutal. You want to talk brutal, if my Son had not died then your mother and the others would have died without deliverance and eternal salvation. Remember there were ten in the van, five are with me and five remain with you. I will give you the strength to witness to your sister and the others."

In April 2013, fifteen years later, AP's sister, Alberta having suffered from a punishing conscious, as a result of that accident, was in the St. Joseph's Hospital in Paterson, New Jersey. At times it seems surreal, but Alberta, his Aunt Mary, his Aunt Jean and the other survivors constantly talked about the accident, it just will not go away.

Having eulogized his father, and his mother, it was through that painful experience that gave AP power to do the work that Christ predestined for him. With this being said, through the

pain, he learned that in suffering there is redemption and God gave him the power and determination to successfully complete his studies.

During this period, AP continued his tenure as pastor of Salem and Wesley United Methodist Churches known as the Florence East Charge located in Florence, South Carolina. There he was blessed with the congregation to build a new church at Wesley, complete major church renovations at Salem, and the purchase of a church parsonage. He completed his undergraduate work and Associate Membership with the South Carolina United Methodist Annual Conference, also served as Chaplain of the Florence County Sheriff Department.

In 2002, AP was appointed pastor of Campbell Hill, Murray and Wesley United Methodist Churches, (The Summerville Parish) on the Charleston District. He's a Collegiate Minority Leadership Award Winner, active in Religion and Race Affairs, and an NAACP member. He served as a representative of the South Carolina Conference at the 2003 National Urban Summit. As a minister, he believes education should be mandatory. As Christ's chosen servant, he needed to continue his education to be more effective in ministry. After completing his undergraduate work, it was clear to him that, he needed his Masters of Divinity Degree.

In 2004, AP enrolled in the Masters of Divinity Program at Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, South Carolina. While at Erskine, he participated in the Morning Worship Services, completed the United Methodist Course of Study in the fall of 2007 and participated in the Commencement Exercises, May, 2008. He completed the requirements of a Probationary Elder in the South Carolina United Methodist Conference and is presently a student at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, pursuing his Doctor of Ministry Degree in Preaching and Leadership. His goal is to serve as an Adjunct Professor in the department theology at an

accredited university, as well as, pastoring and serving within and beyond the walls of the local church, making disciples for Christ.

In 2009, he became the pastor of Majority Missionary Baptist Church, Florence, South Carolina. With each appointment he continues to be very active in community and humanitarian ministry. He was associated with the Low Country Food Bank of Charleston, South Carolina and presently with the Harvest of Hope Food Bank of the Pee Dee area of South Carolina, and Faith-Based initiatives partnership programs, and Congregational Development Programs. He is an active member of the South Carolina Sheriff's Association, and presently, Chaplain with the Florence County Sheriff's Department.

His talents lie in music as a guitarist and in humanitarian ministry. God has blessed him with the ability to be successful in: Inclusive counseling, ecumenical ministries, and nurturing of children and adults. The church has adopted the African proverb: "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child" and the "Church to Raise the Village" and by meeting people at their point of growth.

His goal in life and in ministry is edifying Christ in deed, in spirit, also in an inclusive and ecumenical context for all of God's people. He's convinced, in order to do effective ministry, and do it successfully, education and evangelism is essential. The primary purpose in life is to know Christ and make Him known to others. Within the realm of all of these various activities and ministries, AP finds that time management is critical in accomplishing certain tasks. Therefore, the ability to monitor his work load is essential in order to be effective with his family and ministry.

AP's primary focus is to have a better understanding of the Bible. He is presently researching the Pentateuch and its building blocks. The Old Testament readings are fascinating to the researcher. It has enabled him to better understand the New Testament. Upon completion

of the doctor of ministry program he looks forward to learning more about the Holy Bible. He finds eschatology fascinating. He is reading about Christ the Wounded Healer and learning more about the Holy Catholic Church universal, the traditions of Judaism and Islam and other non-Christian Beliefs.

The practice of ministry provided a clearer understanding from a theological perspective concerning the scriptures as being the final authority in his life. He believes Christ wants us to manifest love to humanity. His heart's desire is to serve Christ faithfully in ministry. By faith, we receive Jesus Christ as the Son of God. AP firmly believes, God is the only divine power who can forgive the sins of humanity. We must spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to remind the world of God's love and saving grace. This mission must be carried out through witnessing by word and deed, sharing the gospel with all people! All of this must be done in the community and the world at large.

He believes the primary tasks of the church today is to be an avenue where the community of believers can come together to pray, strategize, and plan to meet the needs of people of the community and world. AP envisions the church as a body of believes united together by a common faith in Jesus Christ. The Church's mission is to bring back the Kingdom of God to earth, by reaching out with love, care, hope, and words of eternal life. We must continue to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and provide opportunities for others with the hope that they, too, encounter by faith the divine grace of God in Christ. His experience in ministry has been: Baptism and Communion, receiving new members into the Christian Fellowship, transforming lives, strengthening relationships, and ecumenical and inclusive urban ministries.

One of his greatest concerns is whenever individuals leave the church unexpectedly without firm spiritual foundations, and enter into ungodly territories, he personally feels that he

has not effectively helped that individual. What has he learned from this experience? All he can do is offer Christ and continue to pray for their well-being.

The Bible teaches us to study to show ourselves approved of the Lord. It is; therefore, AP's desire to obey the Lord and to achieve heaven's mandate in the highest level of academia, that he may co-ordinate and collaborate in a more effective and holistic ministry to achieve the Great Commission for the advancement of Jesus Christ's Church, as we wait with great anticipation for Christ's Second Advent. After much prayer and discussion with his wife and church family, he came to the conclusion that the United Theological Seminary Program will help him in achieving his goal as he strives toward a higher calling of Christ Jesus.

Contextual Synergy

Majority Missionary Baptist Church is located in the city of Florence, South Carolina. The City of Florence is known as "A City of Character!" Florence is brimming with history, character, and southern charm. Chartered in 1871 and incorporated December 24, 1890, the original township was formed as a railroad terminal. The town was named after Florence Henning Harllee, the daughter of William Wallace Harllee, the first president of the Wilmington & Manchester Railroad. Today, Florence is a community with a population of approximately 33,000 residents.

The City of Florence is a fine example of a genteel, southern city. This mid-sized southern city is large enough to boast a performance theater, symphony orchestra, many ballet companies, museums, festivals, the Pee Dee Cyclones in the Southern Professional Hockey league, and the world-class recreation complex Freedom Florence. Still, the city is small enough to preserve a small-town feeling with a number of tree-lined streets and parks, all of which add to

the pleasant lifestyle that citizens enjoy. Residents exude a strong sense of community pride and southern hospitality.

The city of Florence is the largest city in the northeastern portion of South Carolina in the heart of eight counties between the Piedmont and Coastal regions. The city is approximately eighty miles northeast of Columbia, South Carolina; one hundred miles north of Charleston, South Carolina; ninety miles south of Fayetteville, North Carolina; and about seventy miles west of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Florence is the largest city in Florence County and serves as the county seat.

Florence is located at the intersection of Interstate ninety-five (I-95), the major north/south artery on the East Coast, and Interstate twenty (I-20) that begins in Florence and runs through Atlanta to the western United States. U.S. Highway fifty-two (US-52), U.S. Hwy 301, and U.S. Hwy seventy-six (US-76) also meet in Florence providing access to Charleston, Myrtle Beach, and a direct connection via U.S. Hwy seventy-six (US-76) with Chicago. In addition, Florence is accessible by a recently expanded regional airport, twenty trucking terminals, and both Amtrak and CSX railway services.

Majority Missionary Baptist Church is located in West Florence which is known as District One. This District is an urban community with a high African American population. In this community, the majority of its citizens are hardworking Christian people. Unfortunately, there is the constant reminder of drugs, crime, and high unemployment. Like all major cities in the United States of America, Florence has its urban challenges with which to deal. In West Florence, there is the lack of funding for education, and unfortunately discrimination still exists.

Dating back to the 1968 Orangeburg Massacre that took place in South Carolina, there were citizens of the West Florence community who were victims when nine South Carolina

Highway Patrol officers fired into a crowd of protesters demonstrating against segregation at a bowling alley near the campus of South Carolina State College, a historically black college. Three men were killed and twenty-eight persons were injured; most victims were shot in the back and in the soles of their feet. One of the students injured was eighteen year old, Frankie Thomas from the Florence community. Today, he is the Rev. Frankie Thomas, pastor of Manning Baptist Church, Dillon, South Carolina. One of the injured was a pregnant woman. She had a miscarriage a week later due to the beating by the police. It was the first such unrest on a university campus resulting in deaths of protesters. This Orangeburg incident occurred after large-scale urban riots, which made it seem small by comparison. It may not have been considered as newsworthy, especially as the shootings occurred at night when media coverage, especially any television news, was less. In addition, the victims at Orangeburg were mostly young black men protesting local segregation. It is amazing, the more things change the more they remain the same!

The crime rate and racial profiling is still a major problem in the African American community of Florence. Today, the number of racial arrests target African Americans more than any other race. West Florence still struggles to gain justice and equality. In spite of all of these challenges, there is the determination to restore pride and integrity in the West Florence community.

To achieve renaissance, God has placed in every neighborhood the church. Majority Missionary Baptist Church is centrally located in the midst of a deprived community at 414 North Coit Street, one of the most dangerous areas in West Florence as a light of hope for theological and social transformation. Majority ministers to the community through a variety of methods such as: Worship/Glorifying God; through evangelism/ transforming people to the

likeness of Jesus, and fellowship/receiving believers into membership. Through the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, Majority strives to accomplish the redemptive Work of God, through Jesus Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, by serving this present age our calling to fulfill.

Majority Missionary Baptist Church has actively partnered with the Pee Dee Community Action Partnership Program entitled 'Helping People Changing Lives.' In the medical division, we have Mrs. Janie Flemings who is Program Director of the Medically Indigent Assistance Program. The Medically Indigent Assistance Program was created to offer assistance to inpatient residents of the state needing hospitalization with zero or insufficient insurance. It is funded by county governments and general hospitals. The recipients' gross family income cannot exceed 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. The program coordinator is responsible for information and referral of clients to other agencies and programs for medical and/or other needed assistance.

Majority has an active partnership with The Pee Dee Transitional Shelter, a program that provides long term transitional housing for homeless individuals who indicate a willingness to participate in developing and implementing a plan which has a goal of self-sufficiency. Residents can stay up to twenty-four months. Majority provides financial assistance for low income families with disabilities. These include payments to third parties for medical, child care, self-improvement skills, work uniforms and other miscellaneous expenses. Majority provides transportation for purposes of welfare appointments and trips to and from residents' place of employment in emergencies, or other similar activities for residents who otherwise would have no means of transportation. The agency van is used for these services. The Transitional Shelter provides two hot meals, breakfast and dinner, for the residents. In October 2010, they opened an Early Head Start for homeless children from the ages of birth to three years old. This facilitated

the residents in seeking employment and going to school for training that leads to self-sufficiency. The resident's self-esteem has been raised tremendously by receiving a certificate for training and employment. The Transitional Shelter is directed by Rev. Dr. Mack T. Hines. Dr. Hines, also serves as president of the Pee Dee Baptist Union and former president of the Pee Dee Baptist Association.

Majority Missionary Baptist Church partners with the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) within the Pee Dee Community Action Partnership program. On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which includes $1.5 billion for Homelessness Prevention Fund. Funding for this program, called the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) is being distributed based on the formula used for the Emergency Shelter Grants program. The purpose of the HPRP is to provide homeless prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless, many due to economic crisis, and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who are experiencing homelessness. The funds under this program are intended to target individuals and families who would be homeless were it not for this assistance. The funds provide for a variety of assistance including: short-term or medium-term rental assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services, including such activities as mediation, credit counseling, security, or utility payments, moving cost assistance and case management.

The Pee Dee Caps' HPRP program is audited by the Office of Economic Opportunity and was most recently audited by HUD, our federal funding source. The HUD audit resulted in a stellar report, receiving accolades for programmatic procedures and optimal documentation standards. There were no adverse findings from either audit.

The program is also a part of the transparency in government program began by President Obama, thusly our data is imported into a national system called HMIS. The system has been developed by HUD's National HMIS Technical Assistance Initiative as a central location for communities to obtain current information, publications, and HUD guidance related to HMIS. It has also been designed to encourage peer-to-peer networking and interaction among grantees, communities, and other stakeholders with similar implementations that are close in geographic proximity, or that may be facing similar challenges in their implementations. To date, HPRP has aided over 370 families; that without the program's assistance would have become homeless. In association with the Pee Dee Community Action Partnership, Majority Missionary Baptist Church's food bank and Harvest of Hope food distribution center has collaborated to feed approximately 2,000 families in the year 2014.

Pastor Porter's church and community affiliations include: NAACP Membership; Honorary Member of the South Carolina Sheriff's Association Chaplaincy Program, Florence, South Carolina; The Summerville Ministerial Association; Hospital Chaplain at Roper-St. Francis Hospital, Charleston, South Carolina; Director of Majority Food Bank, and has served as a Minority Advisory Committee Member of the Second Congressional District,108th Congress under the Leadership of Congressman Joe Wilson of South Carolina.

In Matthew 16:18-19, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."[1] Majority Missionary Baptist Church is theologically rooted to ecumenically and inclusively minister to all

[1] *The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version,* (Nashville, Tennessee: Cornerstone Bible Publishers, 1998.), Matthew 16:18-19.

people. Our ministry is achieved by ministering to the needs of the sick, the afflicted, the poor, the oppressed, the outcast, and the down trodden. Majority's mission is to meet people at the point of their need and make disciples for Jesus Christ.

The local church provides the most significant arena through which the making of disciples occurs. The mission of the church proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ and fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world. The fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world is the vision scripture holds before us. The Holy Catholic Church affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Lord of all. Our primary task is to engage in the struggle for justice and reconciliation for all humanity, regardless of race, creed, and cultural or national background. To achieve this goal, we must spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to remind the world of God's love and saving grace. This mission must be accomplished through witnessing by word and deed as well as sharing the gospel with all people who are willing to receive it! All of this must be done in the community and the world at large, because, as John Wesley stated, the world is our parish.

At Majority Missionary Baptist Church where the author is the pastor, his mission is to transform the community to become theologically and philosophically trained as believers, empowered by God to serve, and lead people to salvation. This endeavor is accomplished by loving one another, edifying the saints, seeking justice, ensuring the future of our youth, helping the poor and less fortunate, and moving persons closer to God. As we strive to manifest this vision, we work as faithful disciples of Christ that we may fulfill the mission that was given so long ago in the Great Commission. In Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even

unto the end of the world."[2] Christ has assured believers in the Great Commission to be with us in ministry through our most difficult times. In this, it can be concluded that we have the blessed assurance of Christ.

Majority was established forty eight years ago under the leadership of the late Reverend Dr. O. E. Jackson, after having traveled the distance from Pamplico, South Carolina to the country-side of Saint Beulah Baptist Church, located in Florence, South Carolina. For twenty-five years, he saw a light shining in a little wooden Church on the corner of Coit and Sumter Streets in Florence called Fireside Baptist Church. At that location, the Lord directed Dr. Jackson to establish a house of Christian Fellowship. After much prayer, he shared this vision with the members of Beulah Baptist Church, and the congregation agreed to purchase Fireside Baptist Church with the assistance of Mrs. Walker. The first church meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Viola Sumter. The doors of the church were first opened in 1962 and about seventy-five followers joined that Sunday Morning.

The Reverend Dr. Jackson decided that the church needed a new name. He stated that since the majority of the members followed him to Fireside Baptist from Beulah Baptist Church, why not name this great church "Majority"; thus, Majority Missionary Baptist Church was established. Ministers who served Majority from 1962 to the present were: The Reverend Dr. O. E. Jackson, The Reverend Bernard Austin, The Reverend Joseph Drakeford, The Reverend Dr. W. E. Chaney, and presently The Reverend Alfonso Porter. Under his tenure Majority has purchased six parcels of property for future building projects: a new sanctuary, Christian Academy, Transitional Home and multipurpose facility. We are presently in phase two of our building campaign. The heart of his ministry is trusting in Jesus Christ and the love of God for all humanity. Through all of these efforts, Rev. Porter has worked faithfully to ensure that his

[2] Ibid., Matthew 28:19-20.

congregants receive effective, comprehensive, inclusive ministry to fulfill the vision and mission of the church.

The author believes the scriptures teach eschatology that the end of the world is approaching. Further, he believes that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution, a solemn separation will then take place, the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy, and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of humanity in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness. "During the early Christian centuries, eschatological teaching amounted largely to the exposition of the biblical themes of the Parousia, the general resurrection, the last judgment, heaven, and hell. A unique feature of early eschatological teaching was the widespread affirmation of millennialism, the idea that, at the Parousia, Christ will reign on earth with the saints for a thousand years before the final fulfillment."[3]

The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. believes that religious liberty is a gift from God. We support the freedom of the individual conscience to choose to worship God according to the dictates of one's heart. While we celebrate our own liberty to embrace biblical truth without compromise, we also support the first amendment to the Constitution which guarantees freedom of religion for all Americans. In this light, as Americans, we join with other faith communities in supporting the right of other religious bodies to worship according to the dictates and mandates of their faith.

Majority Missionary Baptist Church believes all individuals are people of worth in the sight of God. Every person has been blessed with gifts for effective ministry. The Bible speaks of the diversities of gifts, therefore, we do not hire ministers to do the work of ministry. Instead, we

[3] Thomas C. Owen and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*. 3rd edition, (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 245.

hire staff to train and encourage our congregants to contribute to the ministry of the church. Based upon biblical principles, the church must ecumenically and inclusively minister to all people.

The author recognizes the great need for theological and social transformative teaching within urban communities. Jesus chose twelve disciples and taught them for three years, which confirms a theological education is mandatory for Christian leadership. It was not until after the day of Pentecost that the disciples were endowed with the Holy Spirit which gave them the spiritual insight and power to preach the Word of God. Jesus instructed the disciples in the Great Commission to: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:…"[4] It is clear in the author's mind that Jesus did not and would not allow the disciples to compromise the gospel. Jesus plainly commanded the disciples to teach the things that Jesus Christ taught them. Therefore, all teachers of the gospel must be under the anointing of Jesus Christ.

[4] *The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Cornerstone Bible Publishers, 1998), Matthew 28:19-20.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART OF THIS MINISTRY MODEL

The ministry model for this project focuses on theological transformation for social change within the urban community. The author focuses on relevant demographic statistical data to address injustice in the Florence urban community, historically dating, from the Civil Rights Movement to the present. To gain a clear and precise understanding of political and social issues in the West Florence urban community, the author did in-depth research using official resources concerning cultural, traditional, and socio-economic issues to adequately formulate an effective solution. The author's position is to address the current problems by implementing effective holistic ministries for theological and social transformation meeting people at their point of growth.

The author's compassion is deeply heartfelt from personal experiences as an African American male who was reared in urban America. Subsequently, the problems which the author witnessed as a child, still exists today. As pastor, he feels it is imperative to fulfill the theological and social principles of the Bible for the equality of all people. The author is resolved to engage as a faithful servant in addressing the challenges confronting his congregants. To achieve this goal, the author has spent a great deal of time researching various authors such as Patricia Cranton's book on professional development for transformative learning.

Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Learning: New Perspectives for Teachers of Adults, by Patricia Cranton, addresses the preparation for

developing and educating adult learners for transformative learning.[1] Cranton's book addresses various learning styles, which enhance adult educators to become more efficient in their vocations by enlightening them of various methods of learning. In chapter three, the strategies for self-directed development are addressed. Cranton discloses the limitation of ones self-directed learning. She states that individuals who engage in this model have a difficult time taking leadership. They are comfortable working with their colleagues, but when given the opportunity to lead, they lack confidence in themselves.[2]

The book *The Historical Jesus,* states:

The Ethnic and cultural tensions between Jews and Gentiles explain that Galilee is called 'Galilee of the Gentiles.' The prophet, Isaiah is probably referring to the fact that after the Assyrian conquest of the Northern Kingdom, foreign people were settled there…. At all events the name Galilee of the foreigners occurs again during the Maccabean revolt in the second century BCE: the Jewish minority there asks the Jews in Judaea for help. One of the sons of Judas Maccabaeus, Simon, thereupon moves this Jewish minority from Galilee to Judaea. Galilee was conquered under one of his successors, Aristobulus I, and united with Judaea. The land again became Jewish: Ituraeans who had penetrated it could remain, provided that they had themselves circumcised.[3]

It further explains social and ecological tensions between city and country as well as social and economic tensions between rich and poor. The hermeneutical reflections

[1] Particia Cranton, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning: New Learning: New Prospectives for Teachers of Adults.* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 95.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 168, 169.

describes that "Jesus' preaching addressed a world full of social, economic and political tensions. When Jesus went up to Jerusalem he became a victim of these tensions."[4] These social and economic tensions are relevant in today's urban communities.

John W. Creswell defines qualitative strategies in *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. The approaches and strategies for designs and planned procedures for data collection have become clearly visible in detailed explanation such as ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research and narrative research. "Recognizing that all methods have limitations, researchers felt that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods."[5]

Introduction to Theology, states "the doctrine of God was at the center of theological debate in the second half of the twentieth century. Langdon Gilkey characterized this debate as concerned with the question of the reality of God and so of the possibility of meaningful language about him. This is a different question than the one addressed under the topic of revelation. There we explored how human beings are able to know God."[6]

In *Polity, Practice and the Mission of The United Methodist Church, Reformation* states "Methodism was also deeply influenced by the emphases of the sixteenth-century Reformation. John Wesley's discovery for himself of the profundity of Romans 1:17—the same verse that had called Martin Luther into a new realization of faith—was the spark of his new preaching in the

[4]Ibid, 181.

[5] John W. Creswell, *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Third Edition, (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE Publications, Inc.), 13, 14.

[6] Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 3rd Edition (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 89.

late 1730's. Justification by faith along connected with Wesley's passionate belief in the all-surrounding power of God's grace."[7]

Evangelical Revival states "If the infusion of Pietist, Anglican, Catholic, and Reformed steams of tradition were not enough already, to them must be added yet a fifth influence, the evangelical revival that swept Britain and America in repeated waves through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."[8]

The book, *The Beginning of Wisdom, Reading Genesis* states that,

> "To wonder at perplexity provokes thought, for all human beings by nature desire understanding. It is especially those natural wonders manifest to sight for example, the changing phases of the moon or the wandering motions of the sun and planets through the zodiac that prompt the search for wisdom: for of all the senses, sight most of all makes us know something and reveals many distinctions. Philosophy, born of wonder, seeks ultimately to know the nature and being of things, as well as, the reasons or causes why things are the way they are for the Bible, in contrast, the beginning of wisdom comes not from wonder, but from awe and reverence."[9]

The goal is not understanding for its own sake, but rather a righteous and holy life. True, the Psalmist sings that "the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky proclaims God's handiwork," but the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and good understanding comes to all who practice it. The path to wisdom and happiness lies not through wondrous sights seen by the eye, but through awesome command heard by the ear.

> The works of His hands are truth and justice; all his precepts are enduring. They are established forever and ever, they are done in truth and rectitude….He has commanded His covenant forever; holy and awful is His Name…Happy is the man that fears [reverses] the Lord, that delights

[7] Thomas Edward Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*, updated Edition, (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 60.

[8] Ibid, 61.

[9] Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom, Reading Genesis*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. , 2003), 3,4.

> greatly in His commandments. Not the attractive, beautiful, ceaselessly circling, and seemingly imperishable heavenly bodies, but the awe-inspiring, sublime, ceaselessly demanding, and imperishable divine covenant and commandments provide the core of biblical wisdom. The wisdom of Jerusalem is not the wisdom of Athens."[10]

We Preach Not Ourselves, Paul on Proclamation by Michael P. Knowles, expresses that by the time we follow his thinking only halfway through II Corinthians, Paul's account of Christian life and ministry begins to look as strange to us as it surely did to the letter's first recipients. By contrast, at least a few features of the ancient world have come into clearer focus. We now have a better sense, for instance, how ambassadors functioned in Hellenistic society, how long people typically lived, and how letters were written. Additionally, there is a better understanding of how words such as grace, freedom, "necessity, peace, Lord, and Savior likely sounded in Corinthian ears and how the Apostle Paul used lexical syntactical analysis for word study and descriptions to embody the Christian message to virtually address everything converts would normally

have expected from religious experience. Not unlike postmodern Westerners, the Corinthians are concerned with body image, personal success, and social advancement; they are eager for divine "blessing," proud of their accomplishments, offended by their uncouth, unconventional preacher, and tempted to look for new leaders more inclined to assist them in their quest for glory.

The crucial issue for Paul is the inclusion of both death and resurrection as essential to the Christian experience. However, herein lies the difficulty, as much for ourselves as for the Corinthians. In the course of the Apostle's correspondence, Paul highlights a series of contrasts that describe particular aspects of Jesus's ministry and/or its consequences for the life of faith.

[10] Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom, Reading Genesis*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3,4.

The book *You and Your Action Research Project"* is a comprehensive guide to how and why you can and should do action research."[11] Refining capacities so that a really good project is completed is important. The authors express their concerns when action research is cast only in the mold of professional development and not theory.

Action research is commonly hailed as a methodology for social and cultural change. We agree, but we think that social and cultural change is the responsibility of individuals working collectively. We believe that change happens first in individuals' minds, so that they bring their new learning to an improved understanding of practice and the practice itself improves. We do not believe that social and cultural change happens because people 'change' one another. Change comes from people themselves and is a feature of daily living. Furthermore, people need to offer reasons why they are changing, and such insights are developed through focusing first on their learning. For us, therefore, action research is about improving practice through improving learning, and articulating the reasons and potential significance of the research, in the interests of helping us all to find better ways of living together successfully."[12]

Historians' Fallacies Toward a Logic of Historical Thought by David Hackett Fischer was very helpful to the author in light of understanding the fallacies of factual significance. The author addresses the historical inquiry in process of factual selections operated in several separate ways. "In every historical inquiry, the process of factual selection operates in several separate ways. One species of selection, commonly called "sampling" consists in the selection of representative facts of a certain predetermined kind, within a closed universe of investigation.

[11] Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead, *You and Your Action Research Project*, Third Edition. (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 1.

[12] Ibid, 2.

This undertaking, difficult as it often is in practice, presents comparatively few conceptual problems."[13]

The book *Palestine in the Time of Jesus, Social Structures and Social Conflicts* by K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman deals with genealogy and descent. "Archeology helps to place the Bible within a real material context. A whole range of literary disciplines examine both the shape of the present text (for example, narrative and poetic forms) and its development through oral and written processes such as traditional history, form criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism, narrative criticism, literary criticism."[14] Matthew's genealogical concerns regarding Jesus, paralleled to a degree in Luke, are unknown in the other New Testament Gospels. Neither Mark nor John has genealogies for Jesus."[15] Systems and genealogies and the particulars of ancestral background carry little practical importance within contemporary United States society. It is a commonplace that we are a "melting pot" culture which is composed of every conceivable national, ethnic, and linguistic group (although some have suggested "mixed salad" as a better image). We may have been raised with cultural stereotypes and prejudices about groups we consider "outsiders," whether based on race, ethnicity, regional origins, or economic status. If a job applicant from Senegal, for instance, listed her tribal group, clan, and the "genealogy of her family on a resume and sent it to an American corporation, her potential employer would not know what to make of it. This information would only be meaningful and clearly communicate her status to those within the same kinship system."[16]

[13] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies, Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1970), 271,272.

[14] K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus, Social Structures and Social Conflicts*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 4.

[15] Ibid, 57.

[16] Ibid, 26.

It is in traditional honor/shame cultures that genealogies are of great importance – where oral tradition is the primary means of communicating culture and in which honor and shame are the foundational values. It is for these cultural reasons that the biblical genealogies are meaningless to most modern, Western readers.

The book *Biblical Interpretation, A Roadmap*, by Frederick C. Tiffany and Sharon H. Ringe, interprets the social worlds of the Bible.

> Studies in the fields variously identified as cultural anthropology, social history, or sociology of the ancient world intersect the field of biblical study as hybrids of complex lineage. Both the methods of investigation and analysis and the data being uncovered are changing at such a rate that even to define the discipline at this point in its history is close to impossible. Suffice it to say, this section lists some of the 'classic' resources that provide information about the analysis of the everyday life people living in biblical times, and the structures, institutions, movements, and ideologies that gave shape to their lives.[17]

The book *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*, by Ted A. Campbell, addresses teachings about the human condition and salvation. "Historic Christian teachings about human nature and salvation attempt to describe the sinful or fallen condition of humankind and God's intention for the healing of that condition. These issues lay at the forefront of the Protestant Reformation, and many of the Methodist teachings on human nature and salvation are the inheritance of the Reformation."[18] "There is a universal need for grace and original righteousness and original sin. The presupposition of these teachings is that human beings were created in the image of God and were endowed at first with the perfect righteousness and holiness that God intended for them.

[17] Frederick C. Tiffany & Sharon H. Ringe, *Biblical Interpretation A Roadmap*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 236.

[18] Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine, The Essentials*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 48.

Thus, the seventh Article of Religion states that original sin marks a fall from original righteousness, which John Wesley sometimes called 'original perfection.'"[19]

In *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition* addresses conversion in the Johannine and Pauline literature.

> Though it is certainly possible to talk about interpreting the Bible in a Wesleyan or Calvinistic manner, and it is of course true that no one speaks about interpreting the biblical text according to a certain tradition, one has already made certain assumptions about what should have priority in interpretation, namely the tradition rather than the Scripture itself. In his preface to the Standard Sermons, John Wesley professed to be a true son of the Reformation when he called himself homo unius libri (man of one book). He, at least in principle, endorsed the hermeneutical approach of allowing the Scripture to have its own say, having the first and indeed the last word and if that word is at odds with one's church tradition, so much the worse for that tradition. The Scripture was seen as the ultimate authority and the final arbiter of the truth about any given tradition, experience, or rational claim.[20]

Preaching Is Believing, The Sermon as Theological Reflection addresses eleven historic Christian movements.

> Preaching in churches and Christian communities should relate the gospel of the God of Israel to the congregation and world in which the sermon comes to life. However, different movements in Christian history have developed their own characteristic approaches to preaching, which are distinctive in theological content and homiletical purpose. At the risk of oversimplification, the book briefly describes leading characteristics in the preaching of the eleven Christian communities.[21]

A few of the Christian communities addressed include The Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic, Lutherans, Reformed traditions and Wesleyan Tradition.

[19] Ibid, 49.

[20] Kenneth J. Collins and John H. Tyson, *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001) 119.

[21]Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching Is Believing,The Sermon As Theological Reflection*, (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 136.

The book, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible, A Theological Introduction* by J. David Pleins provides information regarding

> The halakhic, or legal component of the Torah to that side of the tradition, both in the Torah and beyond, that is rooted in aggadah or narrative. While the lawmaking tradition was clearly taken up with matters of social obligation, with matters of justice, and the treatment of the disenfranchised, the 'grand narratives' of the Hebrew Bible present us with a situation that is difficult to assess. One critical observation might cause us to proceed no further with these writings in relation to our social ethics discussion."[22]

George Santayana's book, *Reason in Common Sense*, addresses the measure of values in reflections regarding honesty in Hedonism.

> To put value in pleasure and pain, regarding a given quantity of pain, as balancing a given quantity of pleasure, is to bring to practical ethics a worthy intention to be clear and, what is more precious, an undoubted honesty not always found in those moralists who maintain the opposite opinion and care more for edification than for truth. For in spite of all logical and psychological scruples, conduct that should not justify itself somehow by the satisfactions secured and the pains avoided would not justify itself at all. The most instinctive and unavoidable desire is forthwith chilled if you discover that its ultimate end is to be a preponderance of suffering.; and what arrests this desire is not fear or weakness but conscience in its most categorical and sacred guise.[23]

William Edgar writes *Lifting The Veil: The Face of Truth* is written in the hope that readers will see the face of truth, ultimate truth, and seeing it, they will grow to love it. The truth is in fact a person. Seeing the truth, then, is something like being introduced to a person, but not just any person.

There is a remarkable text in the Old Testament book of Jeremiah that says, "'When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says

[22] J. David Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible, A Theological Introduction*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 95.

[23] George Santayana, *Reason In Common Sense, Volume One of "The Life of Reason".* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1980), 236.

the 'LORD' (Jeremiah 29:13-14 NRSV). It is from the famous "Letter to the Exiles" in Jeremiah's prophecy…. The people of Israel have lost their land, and all that went with it, especially the temple of the Lord God."[24]

"For one thing, their exile would not be permanent. The Lord would return them to their homeland in seventy years…. But for another thing, it is always wise to seek God above all else regardless of surroundings. Even when the captivity ended, the earthly security of the Jews was in no way permanent. They would never fully own their land again."[25] In like manner, African Americans were brought to this country as slaves, disenfranchised from the social privileges of this country. This country was built upon slave labor and although great accomplishments have taken place, there is still social injustice and African Americans will never be treated with the respect and dignity of the majority of this imperialistic society, nor will they return back to their homeland, Africa.

In *Far as the Curse is Found*, Jesus a new and more glorious covenant states, Even though God has been faithful to the covenant and has been wondrously gracious to Israel, something is amiss. Israel's history has been one of continuous failure of God's covenant people to live according to the terms of the covenant. Each and every promise and provision of the covenant—although kept by Yahweh—has been misunderstood, misapplied, laid aside, ignored, or presumed upon by Israel. Now its inability to keep the covenant has brought ruinous consequences" [26]

[24] William Edgar, *Lifting The Veil The Face Of Truth*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing Co., 1984), 2, 3.

[25] Ibid, 3.

[26] Michael D. Williams, *Far As The Curse Is Found, The Covenant Story of Redemption*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Co., 2005), 206.

"Thus, the prophets begin to speak of a future work of the Lord. They envision this future work in a number of ways. Most significantly, they anticipate a restoration of Israel's relationship to God under a new covenant, they relate God's promise of a coming day of the Lord, and they chronicle their growing realization of God's promise of a special coming King."[27]

In *Educating Christians, the Intersection of Meaning, Learning and Vocation*, religious learning is expressed as being inseparable from life experience.

> Religious learning is about meaning, the fullest and deepest meanings, which connect us with the cosmos and God….In other words, religious learning is interpreting life in relation to ultimate questions and living a life wholly connected to others and to God. We use our meanings to interpret experience. Because of the depth of religious questions, religious learning is often about reconstructing meanings or reshaping temples of meaning."[28]

Additionally, for transformative development in religious learning, we must respect and understand the traditions from the past. It is necessary for witnesses to have the actual facts for precise interpretations which respond to current issues. Therefore, traditions must be understood in their proper context to address the tension and struggles to overcome defiant behavior from social injustice that existed from the past. To achieve this goal, accurate interpretation from eye witnesses of the past must be given very careful consideration. Traditions offer valuable resources of stories images and theological formation for transformative development and discernment of God's call."[29]

Milton Mayeroff's book *On Caring* equips individuals to do effective ministry in the world. Meeting people at their point of growth is imperative to help individuals transform their

[27] Ibid, 207.

[28] Jack L. Seymour, Margaret Ann Crain, Joseph V. Crockett, *Educating Christians, The Intersection of Meaning, Learning, and Vocation*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 82.

[29] Ibid, 83.

way of thinking within the context of having a positive attitude. To achieve this, caring for one's mental and theological understanding is critical so people can present their bodies as a living and holy sacrifice being the temple of Christ. It is not enough to quote theological presentation without faithful application, we must walk by faith and not by sight. By being faithful Christians, we can achieve our spiritual goal of helping those who are less fortunate. Good health is our greatest wealth.

A Theology of the New Testament, states addresses when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan. After His baptism, he was led up by the Spirit in the wilderness to pray for forty days and forty nights. It was at this time that Jesus was tempted by the devil. After He overcame the temptation, He began His ministry proclaiming the Kingdom of God. During this time, John the Baptist was arrested and imprisoned. It was at this time that Jesus came to Galilee teaching and preaching the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Matthew confirms the ministry of Jesus in Galilee stating "He taught in the Synagogues proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom." Further, Luke informs his readers that, while Jesus was in Nazareth, the prophecy of one anointed by the Holy Spirit would come proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. Jesus announced the scripture was fulfilled. In order to understand the prophecy fulfillment, and miracles of Jesus, the author believes it is imperative that accurate interpretation must address the world view concerning Jesus' ministry of the coming kingdom of God. "[30]

Man on Three Dimensions by Kenneth Hagin addresses spiritual conversion and regeneration requires that one must be born again of the spirit, not of the flesh. Both Jews and Gentiles must understand that you must be born again. The Jews failed to understand that circumcision in outward religious acts does not suffice. Jesus requires an inward change

[30] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology Of The New Testament*, Revised Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 42.

beginning with the spirit which converts the heart and mind, this new birth is a rebirth of the human spirit."[31]

Then in First Corinthians 14:14 we read, 'For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth…' The Amplified Translation reads, 'My spirit (by the Holy Spirit within me prays…'In Verse eighteen Paul said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." Paul used the terms "my spirit" and "I" interchangeably."[32]

The book of Genesis brings together stories about the beginning of the world and humanity (Genesis 1-11) with the stories about the beginning of the particular people of Israel and their earliest ancestors (Genesis 12-50). As such, Genesis is important in setting God's interaction and concern with God's specially chosen people, Israel, within the broader universal horizon of God's interaction and concern for all humanity and all creation. The creation of the world and the beginnings of humankind (1:1-11:32).

The Christian life section of the *King James Version Minister's Bible* explains God's plan of salvation stating, the way back to God is through Jesus Christ, God's Son. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the only way back to God (John 14:6). Forgiveness, or salvation, cannot be earned, rather, it is a gift offered to everyone (Titus 2:11) to bridge the separation of human beings from God. To be forgiven we must ask God to forgive our sins, and we must choose to turn to God's way. Jesus died on the cross to provide salvation for Christian believers. Jesus' death and resurrection provided the only way to restore our relationship with God. Therefore, to receive salvation and eternal life, we must trust in Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

[31] Kenneth E. Hagin, *Man On Three Dimensions, Volume I of the Spirit, Soul, And Body Series.(*Tulsa, Oklahoma, Islington (Toronto), Ontario, Canada: Faith Library Publications, 1973), 6.

[32] Ibid, 6.

The Heart And Hand Of God. My understanding of Walker's book concerning The Heart And Hand Of God focuses primarily on Scripture and science. As Walker integrates these two concepts, she addresses the different points of view from a theological and scientific perspective. Based upon Scripture, Walker addresses "the who and the way" and science "the what and the how". The Scriptures point to monotheism which claims that one God created the world and sustains it while transcending it. Based on the precepts of science, the great thinkers like Aristotle, Galileo, and Copernicus, all had their philosophical ideologies concerning Scripture and science. Though they did not always agree on their hypothesis, the fact still remained that they were all aware of a Supreme Being. The question of these great thinkers was not about God's existence but how the universe evolved.

What Saint Paul Really Said. N. T. Wright's book, What Saint Paul Really Said, addresses Paul/s covenant language in both First Century Jewish context and the world view perspective on the subject of justification. Paul was no longer ministering as a Pharisee within the law of Judaism, but he was ministering to a Hellenistic community in an attempt to convert them to become Christians. Paul did not deviate from his Jewish roots; however, he used the language that was understandable to the Gentiles that would enlighten them concerning the salvation of Jesus Christ for all humanity. In the book of Romans we see Paul addressing justification as the very center of his ministry. He was aware that the Israelites were zealous for God, but their zeal was not based on knowledge.

Perspectives on the Word of God. John M. Frame's book on the Perspectives on the World of God has proven to be a very vital source concerning the doctrine of the knowledge of God for me. As I read the subject matter of this book, the author's focus and commitment to the nature and the Word of God enlightened me concerning Christian Epistemology. The nature of

the Word of God must be primary in any philosophy or branch of philosophy. Frame addresses this issue because of the Christian non-Christian beliefs. He pointed out in his book that Christians may sometimes agree with Non-Christians; however, Christians must never alter or avoid Biblical truth. Point in case, when Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees, a religious sect who were very orthodox in their religious beliefs, they refused to acknowledge His teachings.

Samuel Proctor: My Moral Odyssey is a valuable resource stating that "everyone is born into a physical environment, and everyone inherits a moral incubator as well. Before we are able to make conscious moral choices, we are subject to a moral orientation that is unconsciously recorded on our mental computer; and that recording is made indelible when we associate it with love and caring, loyalty and appreciation. A warm, happy incubator, with high moral expectations and consistent rewards and reinforcements for approved behavior, is the most fortunate starting point for moral growth and development."[33]

In *The Substance of Things Hoped For*, by Samuel DeWitt Proctor, he reminds us that most Americans know only those African Americans who appear on the news, but the main flow of life among African Americans occurs largely unnoticed. Nevertheless, "Together, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., became the defining moment for real social change in America. Their witness was the zenith of the long struggle for full emancipation. Some secular critics said King was naïve to believe that a reservoir of white good will existed out there somewhere. They could not conceive of change without bloodshed and wholesale killing. But Martin recognized that our very existence is a free society, with its accent on equality, derived from the ultimate

[33] Samuel Proctor, *Samuel Proctor: My Moral Odyssey*. Foreword by Bill Moyers, (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1989), 21.

victory of the One who died on a Roman cross with a crown of weeds and thistles on his brow."[34]

Saint Augustine Confessions by R. S. Pine-Coffin. The author used this book to address the nature of people when they sometimes feel self-righteous. Pine-Coffin points out "A man who has learnt the traditional rules of pronunciation, or teaches them to others, gives greater scandal if he breaks them by dropping the aitch from 'human being' than if he breaks your rules and hates another human, his fellow man."[35]

Augustine Of Hippo, A Biography by Peter Brown, further explains confessions. "The Confessions are a masterpiece of strictly intellectual autobiography. Augustine communicates such a sense of intense personal involvement in the ideas he is handling, that we are made to forget that it is an exceptionally difficult book. Augustine paid his audience of 'spiritales' the great (perhaps the unmerited) complement of talking to them , as if they were as steeped in Neo-Platonic philosophy as himself."[36]

The Words Of Gardner Taylor, Sermons from the Middle Years 1970 – 1980, states: "If life is to make sense, yesterday's experience must have something to do with today's living. We are to gain confidence for today by what happened yesterday. Sad, indeed, is our human plight if we have to start off each day proving everything as if we had had no experiences yesterday. Sad, indeed, if we have to test fire each day to see if it burns as it did yesterday. Many a love affair

[34] Samuel DeWitt Proctor, *The Substance of Things Hoped For, A Memoir Of African-American Faith*, Foreword by Marian Wright Edelman, (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1995), 73.

[35] R. S. Pine-Coffin, *Saint Augustine Confessions*, (London, England, New York, NY: Penguin Books Group, 1961), 39.

[36] Peter Brown, *Augustine Of Hippo.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University Of California Press, 1967), 167.

has failed because one or both of the partners demanded daily proof of the other's love and devotion."[37]

John Wesley, A Theological Journey, by Kenneth J. Collins has an explanation of faith: "I would rather say, Faith is 'productive of all Christian holiness' than 'of all Christian practice'; because men are so exceeding apt to rest in practice, so called—I mean, in outside religion; whereas 'true' religion is eminently seated in the heart, renewed in the image of Him that created us."[38]

Defending Your Faith, An Introduction to Apologetics by R. C. Sproul was most interesting with regard to saving faith. "Before we can actually call people to saving faith, we have to give them the information or the content that they're asked to believe, and that involves the mind. It involves communication of information that people can understand. Before I can call upon Christ as my Savior, I have to understand that I need a savior. I have to understand that I am a sinner. I have to have some understanding of what sin is. I have to understand that God exists."[39]

How Long O Lord? Reflections on Suffering And Evil, by D. A. Carson, he addresses sin, sickness and death. The author incorporated this information in his document to inform readers of the fact that, if there had been no sin, there would have been no death; however, because of original sin, it is a fact that death is no accident. "First, death must be seen, not as the supreme instance of a cosmic lack of fairness, but as God's well-considered sentence against our sin. Now this is not what the bereaved person wants to hear. I am aware of the other considerations that

[37] Gardner C. Taylor, *The Words Of Gardner Taylor, Sermons from the Middle Years, 1970 – 1980,* Volume 2, (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000), 18.

[38] Kenneth J. Collins, *John Wesley, A Theological Journey*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 142.

[39] R. C. Sproul, *Defend your Faith, An Introduction to Apologetics*. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books A Division of Good News Publishers, 2003), 23.

must be factored into our understanding of death, and many of them are mentioned elsewhere in this book."[40]

Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts by Charles V. Bryant, is a book that could possibly revolutionize people's concept of Christianity and make a positive difference in their commitment to Christ. Bryant states: "When someone asks who gives the gifts, I answer, 'According to scripture, God is the giver; according to scripture, Christ is the giver; and according to scripture, the Holy Spirit is the giver.' The gifts are not merely Holy Spirit-gifts. They are God-gifts, Christ-gifts, and Spirit-gifts. Our confusion often comes from calling them spiritual gifts. The adjective spiritual makes a point of their not coming from a physical source. Because they are spiritual does not mean they come from the Spirit and not God or Christ."[41]

I May Not Get There With You, The True Martin Luther King, Jr., by Michael Eric Dyson. This book addresses the events of the Civil Rights Movement and the relevant discrimination in the context of racism and social injustice. "What is left to say about Martin? We certainly know the broad outlines of his story. And as a result of the work of imaginative King biographers, we are familiar with the intimate details of King's life. Still, most Americans have lost sight of King. They have forgotten what the details mean. I want to provide a fresh interpretation of a peculiarly American life and reconstruct its relevance to America today."[42]

Social And Political Philosophy, Classical Western Texts in Feminist and Multicultural Perspectives by James P. Sterba, addresses the political and social

[40] D. A. Carson, *How Long O Lord? Reflections On Suffering And Evil*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1990), 98.

[41] Charles V. Bryant, *Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts, Building Up the Body of Christ Through the Gifts of the Spirit, (*Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1991*),* 26.

[42] Michael Eric Dyson, *I May Not Get There With You, The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York, London, Toronto: A Touchstone Book Published by Simon & Schuster, 200), xv.

> principles that also reflect theological beliefs of God's existence. "Aquinas's overall goal was to reconcile reason, particularly as reflected in the work of Aristotle, with Christian faith. In our first selection from the 'Summa Theologica', Aquinas pursues that goal by defining law in general as the rule or measure of human acts, a rule or measure determined by reason and promulgated with a view to the common good by whoever has care of the community. Aquinas then distinguishes several kinds of law—eternal law, natural law, human law, and divine law—on the basis of their origins. Eternal law is God's plan directing all things to their ends. Natural law is that part of the eternal law that is knowable by human beings through reason alone. Human law is the determination of natural law by human reason. Divine law is a special revelation from God, directing human behavior."[43]

Exodus, Interpretation A Bible-Commentary for Teaching and Preaching by Terence E. Fretheim, explains: "The story of the call of Moses has long fascinated the community of faith, particularly the burning bush. In my mind's eye is a composite of numerous efforts by Bible storybook artists to depict this incident in full color. As is so often the case, however, the picture stays in the memory but the content of Moses' encounter with the divine remains hazy…. The exchange between God and Moses continues. God speaks to Moses thirteen times…. For Moses to respond to God in such a way reveals some very important things about both God and Moses. Moses' struggle is real, revealing both a lack of personal ambition and a capacity for leadership; Moses can be bold and perseverant in the face of powers beyond his own."[44]

> *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition* by Kenneth J. Collins and John H Tyson gives us an explanation of: "What Conversion Is and What It Is Not. In order to examine its role in Wesley's theology we must first clarify what Wesley means by conversion. In particular, it is crucial to distinguish Wesley's understanding from that of later revivalism. There are at least four errors of interpretation to be avoided, each of which tends to reduce conversion to a single element, and in some cases to define that element in ways different from Wesley.

[43] James P. Sterba, *Social And Political Philosophy, Classical Western Texts in Feminist and Multicultural Perspectives,* Second edition. (Belmont, CA, Albany, NY: Wadsworth Publishing Company, An International Thomson Publishing Company, 1998), 87, 88.

[44] Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus, Interpretation A Bible-Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1946), 51, 57, 58.

> The first is to equate conversion with regeneration. Ole Borgen, in his critique of interpreters of Wesley who equate the two, rightly insists that conversion for Wesley is much broader, encompassing the gift of faith, justification, regeneration (or new birth), and the witness of the Spirit. These elements constitute conversion in both Wesley's theology and Wesley's experience at Aldersgate."[45]

Wesley and the People Called Methodists by Richard P. Heitzenrater gives an explanation of "Pietism and the Religious Societies, stating: Puritans often added a typical Calvinist concern for promoting individual piety, which then became typical of many of the nonconformists. The theological grounding for the Puritan interest in morality was, of course, quite different from the common 'moralism' that simply emphasized the necessity of being a 'good person,' or the 'Arminianism' of the high-Church party that emphasized the necessity of holy living. Both would be charged with relying upon "works-righteousness' for salvation (see Allison."[46]

The Ten Commandments, Manual for the Christian Life by J. Douma. In this book he states: "The exodus from Egypt cannot serve as a model for various liberation movements, but serves rather as the model of genuine freedom that rests in God's promises, of slavery to sin and of the exodus out of that bondage through Christ. Anyone who ignores these aspects will offer merely a superficial analysis of Israel's exodus from Egypt. He will gladly cry out with the Israelites about bondage. (Ex. 2:23), but then easily complain with them in the wilderness when freedom and bread are tied inextricably to faith and obedience toward God."[47]

[45] Kenneth J. Collins and John H. Tyson, *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 44.

[46] Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 17, 18.

[47] J. Douma, *The Ten Commandments Manual for the Christian Life*, Translated by Nelson D. Kloosterman. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 1996), 9.

> *Human Development, A Life-Span View* by Kail and Cavanaugh includes a chapter on 'Expanding Social Horizons, Socio-Emotional Development in Middle Childhood'. The author included this material to support MMBC's village concept of the family as a system. "This view of parents as 'all powerful' was part of early psychological theories (e.g., Watson, 1925) and is held even today by some first-time parents. But most theorists now view families from an ecological perspective (described in Chapter 1). That is, families form a system of interacting elements-parents and children influence one another (Parke & Buriel, 1998).
>
> In the systems view, parents still influence their children, both directly (for example, by encouraging them to study hard) and indirectly (for example, by being generous and kind to others). However, the influence is no longer exclusively from parents to children but is mutual: Children influence their parents too. By their behaviors, attitudes, and interests, children affect how their parents behave toward them. When children resist discipline, for example, parents may become less willing to reason and more inclined to use force (Richie, 1999)."[48]

An Introduction To The New Testament, by Carson, Moo and Morris incorporate information regarding 'The Composition of Luke's Gospel' and states: "It is pointed out that about 60 percent of Luke is not contained in Mark, that about 30 percent of Mark is not found in Luke, that Luke's passion narrative is apparently quite independent of Mark's, and that some of Luke's parallels to Mark contain significant differences. Some have advocated the hypothesis that Luke combined matter from Q and his own sources (L) and worked it into a document. It could be argued that this was meant as a gospel, for the total length of Q + L is greater than the length of Mark."[49]

Luke, Interpretation, A Bible-Commentary for Teaching and Preaching by Craddock, contains an interpretation of Luke 4:16-30…titled Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth, which states: "Luke places the Nazareth visit first because it is first, not chronologically but

[48] Robert V. Kail, John C. Cavanaugh, Human Development, A Life-Span View, Third Edition.(Australia, Canada…United States: Wadsworth, a division of Thomson Learning, Inc., 2004), 258.

[49] D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris. *An Introduction To The New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992), 119.

programmatically. That is to say that this event announces who Jesus is, of what his ministry consists, what his church will be and do, and what will be the response to both Jesus and the church. It is important first of all to allow the passage to remind us of that which Luke never tires of telling: all that Jesus says and does is within the bosom of Judaism. By his faithfulness, Jesus affirms the Sabbath, the Scriptures, and the synagogue."[50]

> *Anatomy of The New Testament* by Spivey and Smith, includes a section, 'Why do the people of Nazareth become angry with Jesus?' and states: "The reception accorded Jesus by the people of Nazareth is rather surprising. They at first accept him as the one who brings salvation (vs.22). In Luke's source (Mark 6:1-6), the people immediately took offense at Jesus' claim to authority. In Luke, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' (vs.22), seems at first to proceed from surprise rather than from anger (cf. Mark 6:3). Nevertheless, in Luke too Jesus is finally rejected, not because he claims authority, but because he extends salvation to the wrong people.
>
> Clearly, Jesus thinks he will be expected to perform miracles as he has in Capernaum (vs.23; although Luke has not yet reported any miracles). Jesus rejects their request, declares that a prophet is not acceptable in his own country, and then speaks of the miracles in the Old Testament that the prophets Elijah and Elisha performed not for the people of Israel, but for foreigners. Immediately, the audience's anger is aroused. Jesus' proclamation is going beyond Israel to the Gentiles."[51]
>
> *Evidence for Christianity* by Josh McDowell, informs us of 'The Formulation of Documents J, E, D, and P.' stating: "In the construction of the four primary documents, the characteristics of each document were predetermined. Then each passage containing the appropriate characteristics was assigned to the corresponding document.
>
> S. R. Driver writes that 'Elohim is not here accompanied by the other criteria of P's style, [that] forbids our assigning the sections thus characterized to that source' (Driver, ILOT, 13).
>
> The result is four documents, each containing material having distinctive traits. But to then triumphantly assert that this demonstrates the original existence of these four documents is logically untenable, for the resulting 'sources' are only the product of a predetermined purpose, totally devoid of any objective evidence or any parallel

[50] Fred B. Craddock, *Luke, Interpretation, A Bible-Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 61.

[51] Robert A. Spivey and D. Moody Smith, *Anatomy Of The New Testament, A Guide to Its Structure and Meaning*, Fourth Edition. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 138, 139.

> occurrence in the world of literature. And so the argument spins in its unverifiable and meaningless circle."[52]

Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling by Howard Clinebell addresses 'A Holistic Liberation-Growth Model of Pastoral Care and Counseling' stating: "The image, paradigm, or model that guides one's ministry is crucial to the growthfulness of that ministry. Without an enlivening vision, persons in ministry, like churches and nations, perish, in the sense of losing their inner vitality. What are the defining characteristics of a guiding model of pastoral care and counseling that releases the healing power of these pastoral arts in the new world of the last fifteen years of this millennium? In this chapter I will describe the characteristics of a paradigm that can help enable persons in ministry to respond to the new needs of our rapidly changing world."[53]

> John Patton's *Pastoral Care in Context, An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, states: "There is no one definition of what it means to be human. Each subculture, each ideology, each religion explains the reality of human nature in its own way. Yet it is clear that to be human involves: first, the ability to participate in understanding and shaping the world in which a person lives; second, being accepted as a subject and not as a thing or object of someone else's manipulation. Recognition of specific contexts for care involves hearing and remembering that (1) tries to discern what is specific and perhaps unique to a particular person or situation, and (2) remains open to the discovery of what appears to be common to many persons and situations."[54]

The author used this source for congregational development from a pastoral care perspective.

Shirley C. Guthrie's *Christian Doctrine* explains 'An Ecumenical Tradition' stating: "At the heart of the Reformed tradition stands the one confession of faith that nearly all Christian

[52] Josh McDowell, *Evidence for Christianity, Historical Evidences For The Christian Faith*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006), 576.

[53] Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types Of Pastoral Care & Counseling, Resources For The Ministry Of Healing & Growth*. Completely Revised and Enlarged. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966 and 1984), 25.

[54] John Patton, *Pastoral Care in Context, An Introduction to Pastoral Care*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 41.

churches everywhere have in common—the Apostles' Creed. The articles of this creed form the main outline of this book. This means that although you may expect some typically Reformed emphases in this book (for instance, the free sovereign grace of God, our total dependence on God, the claim of God on every area of our life in the world), nevertheless you are not beginning a narrow denominational study. In following the Apostles' Creed, I have tried to write not just Reformed theology, but ecumenical (worldwide) Christian theology—from a Reformed point of view."[55]

Old Testament Survey, The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament by Lasor, Hubbard and Bush, points to the 'Role of Moses' stating: "Moses is the key figure in the Pentateuchal narratives, from Exodus through Deuteronomy. Throughout the Old Testament he is regarded as the founder of Israel's religion, promulgator of the law, organizer of the tribes in work and worship, and their charismatic leader. Consequently those who would regard him as unhistorical or a later addition to the Pentateuch render inexplicable the religion and even the very existence of Israel."[56] However, the author used this resource to confirm to his congregants his position of God's call of Moses as Israel's liberator.

> *Church History, From Christ To Pre-Reformation* by Everett Ferguson, has a chapter titled, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and Semipelagianism'. It begins with Augustine. "Augustine is a towering figure in church history. He serves the the climax of patristic thought in Latin and was the dominant influence on the Latin Middle Ages—so much so as to be called the 'Architect of the Middle Ages.' Augustine has continued to be a major influence in theology for both Catholics (especially in his views on the church and the sacraments) and Protestants (especially in regard to grace and salvation).

[55] Shirley C. Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine*, Revised Edition. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 16

[56] William Sanford Lasor, David Allan Hubbard and Frederic William Bush, *"Old Testament Survey, The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982, 1996), 64, 65.

Confessions became a religious classic because of its penetrating analysis of sin and human nature, but it is also great source material for the psychology of religion. Books 1 – 9 are autobiographical, praising God for his graces earlier in Augustine's life despite his own sins; book 10 is epistemological (on knowledge, time, memory, and the church); and books 11-13 are an allegorical exegesis of Genesis 1, praising God with regard t Augustine's present state (having found God, he loves to rediscover him in all his creatures and in Scripture)."[57]

[57] Everett Ferguson. *Church History, From Christ to Pre-Reformation The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context*, Volume One. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005), 268.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In this chapter, the author's focus is developing an effective model implementing social change for the urban community of West Florence, South Carolina. The theoretical foundation focuses upon the biblical scriptures of the Old and New Testament, historical and theological foundations will all focus upon various periods of church history that are in line with the Christian faith confirming God's love through Jesus Christ for all humanity.

Biblical Foundation

The author has implemented the Authoritative Word of God contained in scripture, to affirm the biblical foundations that are relevant for this project. In achieving this goal, biblical references were the primary resources along with scholarly references to address the concerns of social injustice: theologically, philosophically and psychologically for biblical representation. The scriptural references are: Exodus 3:6-10 and Luke 4:14-24. The Old and New Testament scriptures used for this project addresses, historically, the social injustice of both Jews and Gentiles.

The author holds the position that it is imperative for people to understand, God must be the center of our lives, because without God, there is no creation. From a biblical and historical perspective, when men worshipped gods of polytheism, which is an act of idolatry, this act confirms that men have not always, embraced the doctrine of monotheism, "the belief that there

is but One God".[1] The author holds this position concerning his purpose of worshipping God as a monothetic doctrine, confirms our allegiance to glorify, to honor, to praise, to exalt, and to please God. Our worship of adoration and loyalty to God for providential love has provided us a way to escape from sin. Our nature of worship demands that we humble ourselves in contrite submission according to James 4:6 and 10: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble… Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up."[2] Our worship must be unconditionally and shamelessly committed through our deeds that will reflect our assurance that God is God of all or not God at all.

In the Holy Bible, Moses is the author of the Torah, more commonly known as the Pentateuch or The Five Books of Law, Genesis through Deuteronomy. According to certain biblical scholars, Exodus, the Second Book of the Pentateuch, is arguably the most important book of the Old Testament. Exodus explains the narrative history of Israel from the beginning, as a people and nation. In the Torah, the story of Shem to Abraham is introduced. These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood. When God called him, Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Haran and finally to Canaan. God then established a covenant with Abram by telling him that he would found a great nation. Not only would this nation be blessed, God said that the other nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram's descendants.

Israel, the nation that would come from Abram, was to follow God and influence those with whom it came in contact. Through Abram's family tree, Jesus Christ was born to save

[1] *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.), 769.

[2] *New Revised Standard Version Bible,* copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

humanity. Abram, whose name was later changed to Abraham, set about teaching the world that the Creator wants everyone to do acts of charity and loving kindness to all humanity. Therefore, Abraham, by faith, became the Father of Monotheism and dedicated himself entirely to the service of God. God elevated Abraham to an unprecedented level of holiness as a friend and the Father of Faith.

In Genesis chapter twelve, God made a covenant with Abraham to be the father of a new nation that would continue God's work and eventually have uncountable descendants. The new nation would have to undergo many hardships, including exile, slavery, and oppression. Eventually, these descendants would be rescued from slavery; God would call a deliverer to free them from bondage.

God caused a famine in the land the Israelites were occupying so they had to move down to Egypt. They settled in the district known as Goshen. Being descendants from Israel, they called themselves the Children of Israel. The Children of Israel numbered only seventy men and women at the time they entered Egypt. In a few generations they increased until they became a nation. The Children of Israel had not intended to stay in Egypt very long, but after a period of time, the Egyptians looked upon them as a threat to their national security and as a result, enslaved most of them. Many harsh and horrible decrees were passed against the Children of Israel that resulted in social injustice.

Another act of harshness was put into place when the astrologers told Pharaoh that an Israelite male child born would grow up to overthrow Pharaoh. Therefore, Pharaoh decided to kill all the male children born to the Israelites. He ordered them thrown into the Nile River. In Exodus chapter three, God appointed Moses as Israel's liberator.

The Book of Exodus

Overview

Moses the author of Exodus, relates more miracles than any other Old Testament book and is noted for containing the Ten Commandments. Exodus is the story of how the Lord redeemed His people. The Essence of redemption is to be bought back. One of the great pictures of being bought back is in the book of Hosea, who prophesied to a corrupt and idolatrous Israel from his own experience. Instructed by Adonai to marry an adulterous wife, he married Gomer and she bore him two sons and a daughter. Afterward she continued her unfaithful ways and Hosea put her out of his house. But God commanded him to demonstrate his love for her once more. This gracious act would serve as an object lesson of God's great love for Israel despite her great unfaithfulness in chasing after other gods. Hosea responded obediently to the Lord's command when he redeemed, or bought his wife back for a substantial price. In that sense, the book of Exodus reveals how God bought back his people. It was written in the desert during Israel's wanderings, somewhere in the Sinai peninsula, approximately 1450 – 1410 B.C. The key people are Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh, Pharaoh's daughter, Jethro, Aaron, Joshua and Bezalel. The geographical locations: Egypt, Goshen, Nile River, Midian, Red Sea, Sinai peninsula and Mount Sinai.[3] Exodus highlights the Jews departure from Egypt. There are two distinct sections that address the covenant that God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai. God's theological covenant with the Israelites addressed the law, justification and sanctification.[4] God required that Israel would be faithful as a nation and not worship other gods. The Israelites were given the Ten

[3] *The Life Application Bible, New International Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., and Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 102.

[4] Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen, *NIB, The New Interpreter's Bible, One Volume Commentary*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 34.

Commandments as their guide for living a godly life. In Exodus chapter three, God has now decided to do something about Israel's oppression.

Old Testament Scripture

Exodus 3:6-10 (New Revised Standard Version)

> He said further, " I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I and have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.[5]

The author has exegetically expounded upon the historical and biblical references from the book of Exodus to connect it's relevancy to the plight of African Americans in his context, which will address some of the contemporary ills of social injustices. A theological development of God's interacting with Moses and contemporary theologians will be the premises of this section beginning with the introduction of Moses.

> "Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because,' she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'"[6]

[5] *New Revised Standard Version*, Copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, Exodus 3:6-10.

[6] New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Exodus 2:1-10.

Here we see God's protection for Moses while in the basket floating on the deadly infested waters of the Nile River, God would not allow one alligator or crocodile to touch him, not only did God protect him while in the Nile River, God allowed his sister to observe him while floating down the Nile River. God, also, controlled the current of the river to assure Moses safe arrival into the heart and arms of the daughter of Pharaoh who became Moses foster mother. God made Pharaoh, the very man who decreed to kill all Hebrew boys, provide love and nurture to Moses. As Moses grew intellectually in Pharaoh's house, he learned about politics and the Egyptian culture, and was blessed to continue his education of his own Hebrew culture. While Moses was blessed with the comfort of both cultures, later his curiosity and compassion for Hebrew slaves brought about discontent when he saw the social injustice inflicted upon Pharaoh's slaves. As a result, of Pharaoh's harsh treatment toward his slaves, Moses saw a Hebrew about to be crushed and he acted heroically to save the slave which resulted in the murder of an Egyptian soldier. "Moses sees Israel's oppression. This language is used of God in 2:25; 3:7, 9; 4:31; 5:19; 'to see' means to strike a responsive chord. Moses is no disinterested observer and having seen (as God will see) Israel's oppression, takes the initiative to do what he can about it. Moses 'strikes' the Egyptian. Moses' first 'seeing' is an Egyptian (nor necessarily a taskmaster) beating a Hebrew, with death-dealing blows. Moses responds in kind, shown by the use of *nakah* ('strike') in both verses. 'Striking' may or may not be fatal (cf. 21:12-21), but Moses' response in kind suggests that the Egyptian had fatally beaten the Hebrew (or was bent on doing so). Moses made sure he was not being observed, an action that establishes premeditation and the absence of impulsiveness (hiding the body shows a concern for secrecy)."[7]

[7] Terence E. Fretheim. *Exodus, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 42.

In this very act, we see Moses as the embodiment of the future. Here we see God's Divine Intervention as a liberator and He uses Moses. "These stories report three incidents in Moses' early adult life, bringing him into contact with three different groups; the Egyptians, his own people, and the Midianites. Each incident functions to provide a transition to what follows, to identify the adult Moses as an Israelite, to anticipate key events in the subsequent narratives, and to characterize Moses, especially as one who responds to injustice. Moses' own point of view is little in evidence (2:12, 14, 22). We hear more from others than we do from him. He is not yet the character he will be in narratives to come."[8]

To escape punishment, for killing the Egyptian, Moses ran away to Midian. He became a stranger in a strange land; separated from his home and family. It took many years after this incident for Moses to be ready to serve God. But he trusted God instead of fearing the king. (Hebrews 11:27) "By faith he left Egypt, unafraid of the king's anger; for he persevered as though he saw him who is invisible."[9]

While Moses was in exile, he trust God to deliver him no matter how dark his past, or bleak his future. Moses was trained to be an Egyptian Prince. He was given all of the privileges and luxuries that Pharaoh kingdom offered. Now Moses being a fugitive finds himself in a role of dealing with shepherds. How ironic. To see such a sophisticated Egyptian Prince, who at his beck and call, had servants, and now, he was serving flock. Lesson to be learned as the author understands it, God does not always respond to our every beck and call, instantly. We must wait and be of good courage, always obedient to the Will of God. During this time, God was preparing Moses for leadership as Israel's liberator. Moses living the life of a nomad, learned

[8] Ibid., 41.

[9] *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Hebrews 11:27.

about the life style of other people that he would later be leading in the wilderness. Of course, Moses like so many of us, can never anticipate fully what God's plans are for our lives until God chooses to reveal it. No doubt, this lesson for Moses was humbling. Exodus 3:1 & 2 states: "Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed."[10] It is amazing, God used an unexpected something out of the ordinary, a burning bush, to get Moses attention, and out of curiosity, Moses went to investigate. Moses saw the burning bush and spoke with God. Let it be known, many people in the Bible have experienced God invisible, not necessarily human form. Abraham saw the smoking firepot and blazing torch (Genesis 15:17); Jacob wrestled with a man (Genesis 32:24-29). When the slaves were freed from Egypt, God led them by pillars of cloud and fire (13:17-22). God made such appearances to encourage his new nation, to guide them, and to prove the reliability of his verbal message.

When the Lord caught Moses attention, God called him: 'Moses, Moses, take off your shoes for you are standing on Holy Ground.' Here we see Moses acknowledgment and obedience to God. His shoe removal was a sign of humility. And the Lord said: 'I AM who I AM' that is to say the word I AM translate a first person form of the Hebrew verb to be. Meaning is that Adonai, is the self-existent One. His existence depends on nothing or no one except His own will. Therefore when God said I AM, He was referring to His active, life-giving existence. Then he said, "I am the God of your ancestors-the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he hid his face in his hands because he was afraid to look at

[10] *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America., Exodus 3:1-2.

God. Why? Because he believed to look upon God would result in death because he was not holy. In like manner, the author holds the sovereignty of God should always be reverenced by all people for God is above all and man is sinful. Moses turn aside was an act of accepting God's instructions to go to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let God's people go! Of course, Moses being human, at first felt unworthy as a result of low self-esteem to go and demand Pharaoh to release the Israelites. How relevant this emotion relates to individuals whom God commissions initially. God cannot use us when we believe we are capable and strong enough to achieve the mission on our own.

Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt (3:11)?" At that point, Adonai could use him. At forty he thought he was something, but now at eighty he thought he was nothing. He repeatedly called into question his own abilities and conveyed a lack of confidence. This is God's way of training all of His men. The Lord had to take the boy David who could slay a gaint and put him out into caves where he was hunted like an animal until he found out how weak he was. Then God could make him a king.

The author holds the position in this response to Moses age that it should be a lesson to us. Here Moses turned aside from the burning bush. Moses follows the instructions of God, and informs his father-in-law, Jethro as an act of respect because Moses was responsible for Jethro's flock. According to Exodus 4:18, Moses said to him: Let me go back to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are alive. Jethro replied: Go in peace; I wish you well. This is to say when God calls and appoints us, we are still responsible to give respect to whom respect is due.

As God reveals the plan of redemption and deliverance of the Israelites to Moses as their liberator, the LORD, acts as the covenant keeper, talking to Moses, saying to him: Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, Adonai, the God of you fathers – the God of Abraham, the

God of Isaac and the God of Jacob appeared to me as said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. This is to say this would not be a revolution initiated by Moses because Adonai appeared first to Abraham, and later also to Isaac and Jacob, confirming that God's promise in each instance was a reminder to the Israelites that God would give them the land of Canaan. Now God appeared to Moses with the same promise, to present Moses as a true prophet.

"In this exile, the God who hears the cries of those who are in bondage appears to Moses, there by fitting him with the spiritual legitimacy that Moses was lacking in Egypt (3:1-6). By extension, of course, these chapters play a positive role for Judah's own exiles in Babylon who were putting these tales of exile, political legitimacy, spiritual authority, and cultural deliverance into their final form. Repeatedly the text emphasizes that God has heard the outcry of the slaves who are in bondage (2:23-25; 3:7). The facts of that oppression are detailed in several places in chapters 1-3, making it clear that "forced labor" (1:11,14), burdensome "taskmasters" (1:11, 3:7), "bondage" (2:23), their suffering "plight" ('ônî; 3:7), and "misery" ('ônî; 3:17) were the salient features of their oppression."[11]

God equipped Moses to be Israel's liberator to bring them from bondage to freedom. The burning bush reveals God's calling of Moses and informing him he was upon Holy Ground. The story of the call of Moses has long fascinated the community of faith, particularly the burning bush. The exchange between God and Moses continues. God speaks to Moses thirteen times…. For Moses to respond to God in such a way reveals some very important things about both God and Moses. Moses' struggle is real, revealing both a lack of personal ambition and a capacity for leadership; Moses can be bold and perseverant in the face of powers beyond his own.

[11] J. David Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible, A Theological Introduction*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 159.

"Thus, when the divine appears to Moses (3:1-6), this theophany is to be viewed not simply as a revelation of cosmic mysteries but as the commissioning of Moses to carry out YHWH's work of deliverance from a concrete situation of political and economic degradation (3:7-10)."[12] God told Moses to tell Pharaoh, "…Let my people go…."[13] Pharaoh refused to let God's people go. "As the conflict between YHWH and Pharaoh plays out over the next several chapters of Exodus, many of the themes we have discussed reemerge. Continually Moses and Aaron issue their demands in the form of a call to worship their God (5:1-3). Pharaoh's harsh response clarifies and heightens what we already know about the Israelites' plight. Consequently, the workload and the oppression increase (5:6-18). The battle between Pharaoh and YHWH takes the concrete form of brick making quotas and charges of laziness (5:13, 14, 17-18)."[14] Bearing this literary background in mind, we see that the text has rhetorically fitted Moses not only to be a savior of humanity (Israel) against the gods (Pharaoh) but also to be a political deliverer of royal proportions.[15]

God intervened through persecuting Pharaoh with plagues, which suggest that the oppression of any slave master will not be removed without challenge. "This demonstration of power initially takes the form of magic. Moses, acting in the "role of God to Pharaoh" (7:1), to pick up on yet another theme of the first four chapters (cf. 4:16), performs God's wonders before pharaonic court magicians who imitate his every move (7:8-13). Thus, even though Aaron's rod-turned-snake swallows those of the courtiers, Pharaoh acts as predicted, his "heart stiffened and

[12] Ibid, 159.

[13] *The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Cornerstone Bible Publishers, 1998), Exodus 9:1.

[14] J. David Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible, A Theological Introduction*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 158.

[15] Ibid, 160.

he did not heed them" (7:12-13; cf 3:19-20; 4:21-23). The theme of magic is carried forward in the stories of the first two plagues, water to blood (7:14-14) and frogs (7:25-8:11 [8:1-15]). In this way, the text rhetorically outlines the character of the conflict between God and Pharaoh. The conflict is over who commands the forces of nature. At some level Pharaoh does have power, otherwise there would be no explanation for the political and economic force that he wields. Yet his hold is based on low-level powers over nature and is rooted in sheer stubbornness."[16]

The author believes that the biblical historical events shared, is relevant to the enslavement of African Americans who were forced to endure the oppression of slavery and social injustice in the United States of America. However, the history of the Israelites oppression also reflects the evidence of God's constant love that is revealed in the Bible.

The exodus from Egypt story has served as a model for various liberation movements, such as the civil rights movement and the Islam in the African American Experience; however, the genuine freedom of all people rests in God's promises of deliverance from slavery to sin through Christ. Anyone who ignores these aspects will offer merely a superficial analysis of Israel's exodus from Egypt.

The Almighty demands fairness for all people because social injustice has no place at any time for any reason in God's program for the up-building of the kingdom. Thus, the problems we face with social injustice in the twenty-first century is nothing new.

In the biblical foundations in Exodus, God also gave the Israelites two commandments which included circumcision and the Passover of Sacrifice that symbolized complete loyalty to God. Circumcision signifies devotion to God. Additionally, in the New Testament, the circumcision of the heart is also symbolic that Christians present their bodies as a holy and living sacrifice to God. The author holds, when we are humble and obedient to the Will of God, mercy

[16] Ibid, 160-161.

and grace will bring about deliverance from any bondage. God sent Moses and instructed him for the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

The Children of Israel would leave during the day, and everyone would know they were being released. The next morning, on the fifteenth day of Nisan, Pharaoh ordered the Israelites to immediately leave Egypt. Moses told the Children of Israel to call upon all the Egyptians they knew and ask them for their gold and jewelry. The Children of Israel obeyed, and the Egyptians hurriedly gave them their valuables. Rushed as they were, the Israelites did not have time to prepare food, and the dough they kneaded did not have time to rise. Consequently, they were forced to bake them as matzos-unleavened (unrisen) bread. Though they took along with them many animals, they carried the matzah on their own shoulders; they cherished God's Commandment so much that they would not allow their donkeys to carry the matzah. This took place on the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan–the first day of Passover. It was precisely 430 years to the day, after God had promised Abraham his children would be released from Egypt. God had said that the descendants of Abraham would be in exile for 400 years. God had mercy and counted the exile from the birth of Isaac, the son of Abraham, who lived in exile all his life.

Almost 500 years later, they built the Holy Temple, the stationary sanctuary. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by the Babylonians when the Israelites sinned 410 years later. The Children of Israel went into exile in Babylon for seventy years. Afterwards, many returned and rebuilt the Holy Temple. This time, it stood for 420 years until it was again destroyed by the Romans when the Israelites sinned. God's unfailing love for all people is demonstrated in this Old Testament story of the Exodus of the Israelites from bondage to freedom. There have been men such as Pharaoh who thought of themselves as a god, but was awakened by Almighty God to realize that there is but one true and living God. God's plans will come into fruition according

to God's purpose in spite of ungodly people who attempt to hinder. There are so many stories of God's love and providential care for people who have been disenfranchised and placed in slavery.

From the exegesis of Exodus, chapter three, the author understands that God's promises for justice and equality for all people must be our first priority. The forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness, should serve as a reminder that humanity should never take for granted the sovereign love of God and abandon our loyalty as a people of the most High God. Liberation is not free but who God sets free, is free indeed. So let us be very clear, that we are never free to sin against God without Godly consequences.

The social injustices that existed in the Old Testament and the New Testament are relevant today. Historically, from the middle passage from Africa to the United States of America, Africans were enslaved by this nation. Slave labor existed as a legal institution in North America, primarily in the South, for more than a century before the founding of the United States in 1776. The passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1865 addressed the act of social injustice. The Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime. It was passed by the Senate on April 8, 1864, by the House on January 31, 1865, and adopted on December 6, 1865. On December 18, 1865, Secretary of State William H. Seward proclaimed its adoption. It was the first of the three Reconstruction Amendments adopted following the American Civil War.

Unfortunately, the erosion of this unjust system if continued, will paralyze equality, and social justice, resulting in depriving America of fulfilling her mission that "all men are created equal, one nation under God". We must face the fact that, racial discrimination is a totalitarian ideology.

In my context, social injustice still robs innocent people from achieving their potential. There is the lack of funds for education, coupled with hidden and blatant discrimination. To combat this, we must embark upon implementing theological transformative ministry in the urban communities. The author's determination is for Majority congregants to become mobilized as was Moses and other freedom fighters who fought for social justice. The author believes, through the transformation of the Holy Spirit God will transform our thinking to respect all people as people of worth. Only then, can we be united as one nation under God with freedom and justice for all.

The problem of social injustice still exists in the West Florence community. Homes are dilapidated, the walls are decaying, citizens are saddened and feel abandoned by the social ills. God has called the author to be a faithful servant leader like Moses, to engage in effective ministry anywhere social injustice may be, just as Jesus did in Nazareth. Jesus did not restrict His ministry to the boundaries of Nazareth, this was the starting point for He said in Luke, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me to heal the brokenhearted and to bring hope and deliverance to all people. As a servant of Almighty God, the author believes as Moses was compassionate for the Israelites, he, too, must be compassionate for people. The author understands the need still exists for theological transformation for social change not only in urban communities, but universally. According to Gutierrez God promised the Israelites in the Old Testament, a deliverer who was Moses. In the New Testament, a Savior, Jesus the Christ, who entered into human history through the Immaculate Conception to reconcile a fallen humanity to God. Now it is the responsibility of Godly leaders to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus obeyed God, we are charged to obey and honor the gift of the Holy Spirit for the equipping of saints.

"It is certainly true that Luke and Acts presents the salvation of the Gentiles as no new idea, but rather as both foretold and already beginning to be accomplished in the Old Testament. Thus, the "manifesto" of Jesus at Nazareth, rightly regarded as a key passage for Luke's theology, expounds Jesus' liberating mission predicted in Isaiah 61:1, by pointing out how God has in the past blessed Gentiles even in preference to Israelites (Luke 4:25-27)."[17] The author holds the position that Jesus came into the world that we may have life more abundantly, by addressing the social ills of racism and injustice inflicted upon those who were disenfranchised. The author studied intensely how Jesus' concern addressed the eschatological ethics contemporary with His ministry and future kingdom, "Eschatological ethic. However, the radicalism of Jesus' ethic is explained more by his eschatological expectation than by the wisdom-type quest for a life in accordance with the present creation. The kingdom of God appears in the preaching of Jesus as an ethical power which transforms the world and involves human beings in this transformation. Here the human being is confronted with a divine will which leads beyond Torah and wisdom without being fundamentally in tension with them."[18]

To achieve God's purpose, the author is committed to teaching according to the scripture because it transcends denominationalism in the context of One Lord, One Faith and One Baptism. This allows the great commission of Jesus Christ to be enforced. Therefore we must understand how Jesus paved the way for all people to be respected and honored as people of Godly integrity.

Ladd points out in his book: "The entry of Gentiles into the people of God is the result not of Jewish unbelief but, on the contrary, of the success of the gospel among the Jews,

[17] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology Of The New Testament*, Revised Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 240.

[18] Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, A Comprehensive Guide. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 348.

thousands of whom were converted according to Acts, and from among whom came the missionaries who 'bring the gospel to the Gentiles, thus fulfilling God's promises to Israel that Gentiles would join with them at the end of time.'"[19]

New Testament Scripture

Luke

Overview

[19] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology Of The New Testament.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 240.

The gospel of Luke is written by Luke, who is also known as the physician. He addresses the acts of Christian origins. He wrote a more excellent account using source materials and reports that circulated among the early Christians from eyewitnesses of what God has done in fulfilling promises. Luke, a doctor, a Greek and Gentile Christian is the only known Gentile author in the New Testament. Luke was a close friend and companion of Paul. He also wrote Acts the two books go together. Luke's primary audience was Theophilus ("one who loves God"). The key people addressed in his writings are Jesus, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Mary, the disciples, Herod the Great, Pilate, Mary Magdalene, Gentiles, and people everywhere. Luke wrote from Rome or possibly from Caesarea about A.D. 60."[20] Luke embeds the story of Jesus in the history of Israel, whose hopes and scriptural promises find fulfillment as recorded in the book of Luke.

In Luke chapter four, The Spirit of the Lord that came to Jesus at his baptism and sustained him through his wilderness ordeal now energizes an itinerant ministry in Galilee, and those who hear Jesus' teaching respond with praise. Jesus also provokes a hostile response in Nazareth, his childhood home. In a dramatic scene in the synagogue, Jesus reads from Scripture, selecting a passage from Isaiah (61:1-2a, but adding a line from Isa. 58:6), and then claims that the scripture "has been fulfilled in your hearing".

New Testament Scripture

Luke 4:14-24 (New Revised Standard Version)

[20] *The Life Application Bible, New International Version.* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. and Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 1781.

> Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown."[21]

In this chapter, Luke points out the mission of Jesus' ministry. The primary objective is the declaration in which Jesus proclaimed: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the Good News to the poor. The term good news appeared first in Luke's writings 1:19, and 20:10 with the angelic announcement of the Birth of Christ. Throughout the ministry of Christ, the term Good News (gospel) summarizes His earthly ministry. Jesus states: I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in Luke 4:43. In this proclamation, the Good News, is available to whosoever will accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

The book of Luke has three primary focuses: (1)Jesus is the bearer of the Spirit which He received at His baptism. Luke 3:22-23: While He was praying the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven said: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Previously Jesus had been conceived by the Holy Spirit and afterwards is led into the desert by the same Spirit for a period of temptations Luke 4:1-13. After the temptations, Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the

[21] *New Revised Standard Version Bible,* copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Luke 4:14-24.

Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. Jesus was called by the Spirit of the Lord to bring the "Good News" to all people. (2) Jesus is an eschatological prophet, a role intermingled with that of John the Baptist. John was the prophetic forerunner. Luke gives special attention to Jesus as a prophet in a number of ways: Luke points out from Isaiah 61, the prophesy of the Good News to the poor which Jesus proclaims in His ministry. Luke 7:16, 39 occurs after Jesus raises a widows son. They were all filled with wonder and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." "One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to come to his home for a meal, so Jesus accepted the invitation and sat down to eat. A certain immoral woman heard he was there and brought a beautiful jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them. When the Pharisee who was the host saw what was happening and who the women was, he said to himself, "This proves that Jesus is no prophet. If God had really sent him, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!" [22]

Jesus appears after the resurrection to two believers traveling on the Road to Emmaus. Jesus asked them the subject of their discussion. About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people" Luke 24:13-19. Here Jesus was called a prophet and not Christ. Jesus' reply: "In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem". (3) The prophetic role of Jesus overlaps His role as Messiah. His ministry of deliverance for the oppressed is Messianic in character. The "Good News" Jesus is to proclaim recalls both the joyful announcement in Luke 1:19 when the angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the

[22] Life Application Study Bible, New Living Translation. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1988), Luke 7:36-39

presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news" and the message of the angel in Luke 2:10-11. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

The Messiahship builds from Isaiah 40:9 where it is stated: You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" Isaiah 52:7 states: How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

The "poor" like the "prisoners", the "blind" and the '"oppressed" are not only the unfortunate of this world but are those who have a special dependence on God. The theme verses indicate a concern for people with all kinds of need. Luke 7:22 cites some ways Jesus fulfilled this mission. So He replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have been and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

This year of the "Lord's favor", mentioned in the theme verses, defines a time in history when God in His sovereign grace brings freedom from guild and the effects of sin. The inclusion of this quotation is consistent with Luke's stress on the dawning of a new age of salvation. The Jews support that the day of their salvation will be the day of judgment on their pagan enemies, but Jesus says the Gentiles will also receive God's grace even if the Jews were not so blessed.

According to Romans 10:15 -17, “And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news—the Good News about Christ.”

After the Baptism of Jesus Christ, when a voice came from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased and a dove descended upon Him. Jesus was then led up by the Spirit to fast for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness. According to Matthew 4:11, Satan tried to tempt Jesus but Jesus was determined and committed and told Satan to get thee behind me. Angels came and ministered to Him. This is to say when people as faithful servants of God, honor and obey God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will empower us to overcome the temptations of Satan. Jesus **,** at the age of thirty, made His public announcement, “To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” The acceptable year of the Lord addresses the poverty of economic and political injustice that results in separation of the ‘have’ and the ‘have nots’. This gospel brings the Good News to all, especially the disenfranchised. The anointing of Jesus rests upon Him, the Holy Spirit empowered Him, to preach the gospel of Good News to the poor. The poor is a term (ptochos) refers to the poor or utterly destitute. Jesus ministered to the poor throughout His teaching. The poor are blessed (6:20) The poor are the subject of the Good News (7:22) The poor are invited to the Banquet (14:13 and 14:21). The poor are given special attention, such as Lazarus, the beggar at the rich man’s gate (16:20 and 22). Jesus challenged the rich man to give his wealth to the poor (18:22). Jesus addresses Zacchaeus concerning the poor, and his response was one of fairness concerning the poor. The poor widow’s offering in the temple received notice as a loving gift (21:2-3). The author holds, the ministry to the poor is

to support and equip them to become independent, spiritually and economically. Jesus returning home should have been a time of celebration, but unfortunately, the leaders were blind and instead of accepting Jesus as the Messiah, they rejected Him and wanted to kill Him. Why? Jealousy and envy! There are three points to note concerning the Jews rejection of Jesus' ministry:

Jesus was judged by his family connections: "Isn't this Joseph's son?"; The Nazarenes reckoned that because they were familiar with Jesus he couldn't possibly deserve the reputation he had acquired in Galilee" He'd been their carpenter, they could name his entire family. And the skepticism of the folk at Nazareth shows how little impression sheer goodness makes. "They had lived with an ongoing miracle for nearly thirty years and it had left them totally unmoved." Further, the Jews at Nazareth felt that they were better than the Gentiles and felt that they deserved a position above the Gentiles. Others felt that Jesus was going to establish a political kingdom and overthrow the Roman Empire and they would have authority over the political leaders of their day.

When the disciples saw the danger and the anger of the Nazarenes towards Jesus, they were terrified and asked Jesus to perform one of His miracles to convince them that He was the Messiah. However, Jesus did not want people to accept Him for his miracle working powers, He wanted them to believe and receive Him as the Son of the Living God. Jesus could have come from one of the most elite communities; however, He came from Nazareth. Instead, He was reared in Nazareth. Nazareth was despised by the Jews because a Roman army garrison was located there. Some have speculated that an aloof attitude or a poor reputation in morals and religion on the part of the people of Nazareth led to Nathanael's harsh comment. Jesus the

Messiah came from Nazareth as a sign of His humility and humble beginnings to minister to those who were disenfranchised from society.

Unfortunately, many citizens of West Florence take on the negative attitude as did Nathanael when he asked the question: Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? West Florence, is considered to be the ghetto, suggesting that all of the citizens who live in this community are considered 'throwaways' of society. These people are stigmatized by many political leaders. Sadly, some Christian organizations are prejudiced due to their own self-righteousness. They look down with disgust on these citizens who are crying out for help.

Jesus returns to Nazareth to begin His ministry. Luke tells us, the same Spirit that came to Jesus at His baptism and sustained Him through His wilderness ordeal, now energizes an itinerant ministry in Galilee. Those who heard the teachings of Jesus responded with praise. In a dramatic scene in the synagogue, Jesus reads from scripture, selecting a passage from Isaiah (61:1-2a, but adding a line from Isaiah 58:6) "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"[23]

The synagogue audience, though puzzled because they knew Jesus as "Joseph's son," nevertheless, they received the hope-inspiring words. However, Jesus immediately indicated that the good news was for all mankind. Jesus' remarks filled the people of Nazareth with rage because He was saying that God sometimes chose to reach Gentiles rather than Jews. Jesus implied that His hearers were as unbelieving as the citizens of the northern kingdom of Israel in the days of Elijah and Elisha, a time notorious for its great wickedness. Jesus illustrated the point by recalling episodes from the careers of Elijah and Elisha when they brought help not to people

[23] Ibid., Isaiah 58:6.

in need within Israel, but to outsiders. The implication was twofold in that Jesus had a prophet's task, that was designed to shatter traditional barriers and transgress conventional boundaries. This is to say that Jesus brought social independence through preaching the Good News concerning liberation. Just as God gave Moses the staff of empowerment, Jesus returned from the forty day wilderness experience in the Spirit and Power of God. The author holds the position that God equips leaders to achieve the mission for the up-building of the kingdom of heaven.

After Jesus' rejection at Nazareth, He left Nazareth and traveled to the Sea of Galilee from the northern bank of which began his lively activity as an itinerant preacher. The center of Christ's itinerant activity was Capernaum to address the Jewish country folk in and around Galilee who had been made unsure of their identity by Hellenistic city culture. "Jesus' preaching addressed a world of social, economic and political tensions. When Jesus went up to Jerusalem he became a victim of these tensions. Traces of Jesus' way can be illuminated by territorial history."[24] This scene previews the story's plot in another sense. Enraged by Jesus' words, the Nazareth audience seeks to put Him to death, but without success, as His appointment with a prophet's destiny lies ahead at Jerusalem (Luke 13:33-34). For the present, Jesus has more work to do among His people. How will nearby Capernaum respond to Him? The question is relevant today, we must learn to move beyond racism, and injustice, and focus on doing good for all humanity. Further, this concept can be promoted by the Great Commission.

When prejudice is prevalent, injustice destroys the unity that God desires for human kind. Jesus was confronted at Nazareth with a racist response; however, Jesus did not allow this reaction to hinder Him from fulfilling the mission for which God anointed Him to do, which is to bring deliverance and liberation to all people, spiritually and socially. Here Jesus fulfills the

[24] Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 180-181.

prophecy of Isaiah 53:1-3, in that Jesus comes to His hometown to share the good news of deliverance and liberation to a people who were disenfranchised.

Jesus demonstrates through the anointing of God by preaching the gospel to the poor. These are those who lack consideration, economically were oppressed, but not necessarily unrighteous. Many of them lived from day to day trying to maintain their basic necessities to feed their families. It is only reasonable that God would send Jesus Christ to the poor first, those with less than adequate means, lacking in material possessions, or characterized by poverty. Secondly, Jesus' ministry was to heal the brokenhearted. He focused on healing the victims of physical and spiritual calamities of deep distress, or misery caused by major misfortune, loss or an extraordinarily grave event marked by great loss and lasting distress and affliction. Thirdly, Jesus' ministry was to preach deliverance to the captives. He ministered to those who were confined, or held under control of another, but having the appearance of independence, or those held in a situation that made free choice of departure difficult. Fourthly, Jesus' ministry was to those who were spiritually blind. They had the ability to physically see, but did not understand spiritual revelation; therefore, they could not interpret and transition from the physical realm to the spiritual realm. The physical blind was unable to understand how to speak those things that are not as though they were. They were like Nicodemus who did not understand new birth. Fifthly, Jesus' ministry was to set at liberty them that were bruised, those bruised mentally and emotionally as a result of psychological hurt. Finally, Jesus' ministry was to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Today in the twenty-first century, this message of liberation is so relevant to the needs reflected in Isaiah's writings addressing social ills. The author is compelled to follow the

example in addressing the injustice inflicted upon the poor and disenfranchised in the Florence community, as Jesus taught concerning the prophecy of Isaiah.

In today's society, many people who are disenfranchised and those who have the luxuries of life are not exempt from the idiosyncrasy that Isaiah addressed before the Birth of Christ. The focus of effective teaching and preaching is not excepted when compared to liberation and posterity teaching, that only leads to vanity. Today, we must be reminded that Jesus the Son of the living God did not conform to the status quo. Jesus became the wounded healer for all humanity because He had no sin; however, He took on the sins of mankind and suffered under Pontius Pilot to reconcile us to God.

Approximately 2000 years later, Jesus fulfills Isaiah's prophecy. God appointed Jesus Christ as the great head of His church, and Jesus calls and equips ministers to carry out the Great Commission by addressing the same social injustices that He encountered at Nazareth where racism, bigotry, and social injustice were prevalent. Jesus' message of deliverance for all people was rejected. Unfortunately, this situation of non-belief is still relevant among many people in society today.

The author holds the position that all of God's people in particularly ministers must uphold biblical principles and effectively engage in reaching those who are disenfranchised by teaching them that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's universal plan for all humanity.

God's love is not static or self-centered; God's love is universal. God sets the pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships. When you love someone dearly, you are willing to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice. God paid dearly with the life of Jesus Christ, the highest price God could pay. Jesus became the Suffering Servant Messiah and accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life that He had bought for

us. The author is concerned with his legacy, what can I leave behind that will have a lasting, positive effect on future generations as a faithful servant of the Most High God. The author believes that his greatest achievement is to obey God's commandments and share the gospel with others. Our love must be like Jesus' love, willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love. Jesus said: My peace I leave with you and when we strive for righteousness, it results in peace, and when this is accomplished, theological transformation is achieved.

Historical Foundations

In David Hackett Fischer's book, *Historians' Fallacies*, he states:

> "One of the first duties of man is not to be duped. by Carl Becker. "The Fallacies Of Factual Verification states: The best historical questions are no better than the answers which they generate—true answers, which are the object of all empirical inquiry. It is no easy matter to tell the truth, pure and simple, about past events; for historical truths are never pure, and rarely simple. And the process of historical truth-telling itself is even more intricate than the truths which historians tell. Every true statement must be thrice true. It must be true to its evidence, true to itself, and true to other historical truths with which it is colligated. Moreover, a historian must not merely tell truths, but demonstrate their truthfulness as well. He is judged not simply by his veracity, but by his skill at verification."[25]

The author has focused upon seeking accurate, historical records that will enable his readers to have a clear connection between the theoretical, theological and philosophical truths based upon the integrity of theologians and other scholars for his historical foundations. Looking at biblical history, the social issues in the twenty-first century are nothing new. Whenever humanity disobeys the Almighty God, it will result in theological, philosophical and psychological problems. God revealed the theological manifestation for humanity when the Creator made man in the image and likeness of God and decided that man should not be alone. The Almighty blessed Adam and Eve for procreation; therefore, it is imperative that humanity realizes God made us not only as spiritual beings, but also social beings. Thus, humanity must understand that if God is not the center of our lives, then our lives are not properly balanced or adjusted. Historically, when people worshipped deities of polytheism and henotheism, they failed to honor the monotheism of one God, Creator of all things. Before original sin, Adam and Eve were holy and righteous, in perfect fellowship with God. After original sin, their personal relationship suffered as a result of their disobedience. God removed them from the Garden of Eden, placing them in a community that challenged their spiritual and social needs. Although

[25] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies, Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*. (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, A Division of Harper Collins Publishers, 1970), 40.

their marriage did not break up, it did break down causing social problems and conflicts. This is the second dispensation, where man is now conscious and feels the consequences of disobeying God.

God tells man to govern for good; however, man disobeys God and governs for himself. Man's self-governing results in more social conflict. Cain killing Abel represents a pinnacle event of social upheaval. Thus, the author holds the position that original sin initiated social problems and issues. In the community of Christian faith, our theological formation must hold true to the written scripture. This biblical information must become applicable for mobilizing the community of faith. To deal with the problems and social issues in the community of faith, Christians must rely on biblical history. Biblical history confirms and enlightens' us concerning the verification of factual truth knowing that the social issues that existed from Adam's fall and all the generations of the Old Testament were all a continuation of original sin. The inhabitants of the Old Testament all struggled with social injustices from Genesis to the book of Malachi. Everette Ferguson, in his book states: "Church history is the study of the history of God's people in Christ, a theological claim, or, speaking more neutrally, of those who have wanted to be God's people in Christ. It is a mixed people, and the story is a mixed story. This comes as no surprise, of course. Just as the biblical record of the people of God is the story of a mixed people with great acts of faith and great failures in sin and unfaithfulness, so is the history of the people who have made up the church through the ages."[26]

In the New Testament, Jesus had to minister to the fall and reconciliation of man. In *The Historical Jesus* by Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, they address:

[26] Everette Ferguson, *Church History From Christ to Pre-Reformation,* Volume One. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005), 25.

> "The tension between wisdom and eschatology could indicate that, like all Jews, Jesus centered his life on the Torah and that the wisdom and eschatological aspects formed only the framework of his ethics. The wisdom-type images drawn from creation (e.g. of the 'lilies of the field') and the eschatological expectation serve as motivation towards doing the will of God. But the content of the will of God arises out of the interpretation of the Torah. Such an interpretation of the ethic of Jesus in terms of the Torah still comes up against traditional prejudices which caricature the picture of Jewish Torah ethics in the Christian tradition. Here, briefly, are five such prejudices:
>
> 1. *The absolutizing of the Law*: after the exile the Law became a constitutive entity of the covenant instead of being a regulative factor within the covenant (thus M. Noth, G. von Rad).
>
> 2. *Casuistry*: the Law is interpreted casuistically, i.e. in terms of many individual cases. As a result the will of God which lays claim to the whole person is split up (and thus the whole person is removed from the will of God).
>
> 3. *A Morality of recompense*: obedience to the Law is motivated by the prospect of recompense. Therefore there is a concern to acquire superfluous merits.
>
> 4. *Formalism*: the Law is obeyed because it is commanded. Obedience to the law is 'heteronomous', i.e. it follows an alien law and not its own insight.
>
> 5. *Suffering under the Law*: life under the Law was felt to be a burden (cf. Matt. 23.4; Acts 15.10,28). The scribes burden people with unnecessary demands."[27]

The Intertestamental period "400 Silent Years" is believed to have been a span where God revealed nothing new to the people. However, social and injustice issues were prevalent during this period when most of the apocryphal or deuterocanonical books accepted as scripture by Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, were written during this time. The New Testament proclaims the fulfillment of the prophecy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as He enters into a society of racism and discrimination, which caused the Israelites to live in fear. Social issues were plaguing the community of faith under the oppression of evil rulers resulting

[27] Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus, A Comprehensive Guide. (*Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 348-349.

in suffering and pain. Jesus, at the age of thirty, now announces His ministry at Nazareth by addressing, the social injustices of the destitute. Therefore, the struggle with social issues in the twenty-first century is nothing new. The Bible teaches from the ministry of Christ that the poor you will always have with you, but justice and equality should be the ethical values by which you live.

The author believes the community of Christian faith is still responsible, ecumenically and inclusively to address the social problems that exist today. To achieve this goal, there must be total commitment for the good and up-building of the kingdom of God. When God took man out of the garden, God did not abandon Adam. The author holds God had a plan of redemption for humanity before original sin for motivation.

The author has researched creditable resources for theological and historical information to develop a more excellent report for his congregants using such historians

David H. Fischer. Fischer's book, *Historians' Fallacies* in chapter seven 'Fallacies of Motivation' quotes:

> "Men are not machines…They are men – a tautology which is sometimes worth remembering. by Gilbert Ryle. Motivational explanation might be understood as a special kind of causal explanation in which the effect is an intelligent act and the cause is the thought behind it. Or it might be conceived in non-causal terms, as a paradigm of patterned behavior. My own preference runs to the second of these propositions, but there is no need to argue their relative merits here. The following observations are consistent with both.
>
> Historians have often used motivational explanations in their work. Almost always, they have used them badly. Problems of motive in academic historiography tend to be hopelessly mired in a sort of simple-minded moralizing which is equally objectionable from an ethical and an empirical point of view."[28]

[28] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies, Toward a Logic of Historical Thought.* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial A Division of Harper Collins Publishers, 1970), 187.

The author is concerned with the human race as the Holy Scripture addresses the love and equality that God requires for all people. George E. Ladd's book: "A Theology Of The New Testament, addresses humanity, as:

> " The old liberal interpretation of humanity had wide influence both in theological and pastoral circles. 'In the combination of these ideas – God the Father, Providence, the position of men as God's children, the infinite value of the human soul – the whole Gospel is expressed.' 'The whole idea of a family – fatherhood, sonship, brotherhood – is the unifying conception in his doctrine of human nature; we do well to classify and test all our resolves by it, including our whole idea of the kingdom of God.' Robinson would distinguish between that which is transitory and external and that which is permanent in Jesus' teaching. Eschatology belongs to the transitory elements; the permanent core is the filial relationship between humankind and God."[29]

History reveals the facts that social injustice has existed from the second dispensation (the fall) to this present day. Original sin has contaminated the innocence of humanity from the fall of Adam. The Bible and human history both confirm the evil that existed from the fall to the current struggles that the church is confronted with today. The Christian community must embrace all people knowing that we all are entitled to forgiveness, reconciliation and economic equality. According to Fischer's Historians' Fallacies, he states: "A historiographical example is suggested in an article by M. Rostovtzeff, 'The Decay of the Ancient World and It's Economic Explanations'. The author examined the accuracy of interpretations of 'the decline of ancient civilization,' and sensibly concluded that much depends upon the way in which that phrase is accented. To speak of the decline of ancient civilization is one thing, But to talk of the decline of ancient civilization is quite another. Thus Rostovtzeff wrote, 'to apply to events in the ancient world in the centuries after Diocletian and Constantine the term 'decay' or 'decline' is unfair and

[29] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology Of The New Testament.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 52.

misleading. If, however, in the formula 'decay of ancient civilization' we lay stress on 'ancient' and not on 'civilization,' the formula hits the mark."[30]

In Ladd's book, he points out four basic teachings are deduced which constitute the main outlines of this permanent core.

- First is the supreme value of humans as children of God. In the eyes of God human life is of unique and priceless worth.
- Second, is the duty of people as children of God. Humanity owes to God a relationship of filial trust and obedience.
- Third is the natural deduction of the 'brotherhood of man.' This is universal because God's Fatherhood is universal.
- Fourth, it is recognized that sin has broken the relation of sonship but has in no way impaired God's Fatherhood. The mission of Jesus aims at the restoration of that which ideally belongs to humanity."[31]

To incorporate the essential scholarly references, the author felt it was necessary to use in his weekly sermons, messages that reflect the historical teachings to inform his congregants, using material in a hermeneutical context relevant to his document from Leander E. Keck. In Keck's book: *The Bible in the Pulpit*, it is stated:

> "The distinction between the exegetical task and that of historical reconstruction clearly pertains primarily to narratives that purport to be accounts of events; narrative reports of visions, on the other hand, can scarcely be checked historically, and the content of the vision itself is not subject to historical reconstruction at all. At best, one might interpret it psychologically. In the case of narratives in the historical mode, the exegetical task is to understand and present the meaning of the account as it stands. The historical task is to ascertain the relation between the account and what happened, on the one hand, and to reconstruct the event as fully as possible, on the other."[32]

[30] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies, Toward a Logic of Historical Thought.* (New York: Harper Perennial, A Division of Harper Collins Publishers, 1970), 272, 273.

[31] George Eldon Lass, *A Theology Of The New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 52.

[32] Leander E. Keck, *The Bible in the Pulpit, A Renewal of Biblical Preaching*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), 125.

This is why it is so important to be true in the exegetical process to avoid eisegesis of the text. As the major and minor prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles were held responsible to teach according to God's written word and the teaching of Jesus, today, ministers are held to the same level of biblical integrity. We must understand that chronologically, [in the passing of time], God's Word does not change. The prophesy of Jesus Christ concerning the eschatological period must be clearly taught to people. We are not exempt from rejection in this ungodly society but we are to let our light shine that the world may see that Christ lives within us.

The author, also, incorporated great thinkers from a theological and scientific perspective to holistically connect both views, giving his readers insight to better understand the evolution of time and eternity. Such great thinkers as: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Galileo, and Copernicus, all had their philosophical ideologies concerning scripture and science. Though they did not always agree on their hypothesis, they were aware of a supreme being. The question of these great thinkers was not only about God's existence, but how the universe evolved.

The author believes The Almighty has a purpose and calling for all people. Unfortunately, there are some people in society who reject Jesus Christ and inflict harm upon those who take a stand for social justice and equality: people like Gandhi of India; Socrates of Athens who was faced with the bitter, cup of hemlock; Nelson Mandela, who was imprisoned for twenty-seven years for his stance against apartheid and Martin Luther King, Jr. of America, who was imprisoned because of his stance for civil rights and later assassinated. The author holds the position that you may kill the dreamer but you cannot kill the dream. He realizes to achieve theological transformation for social urban ministries, will require a paradigm shift built upon theological, biblical and historical foundations for effective social change. To achieve this

change, the author understands the importance of not moralizing from the Bible, because moralizing violates the integrity of God's Word. As stated in Keck's book,

> "he addresses that moralizing distorts the historical reality and concreteness that characterize the Bible because it idealized the past in a way that the Bible usually does not. This occurs especially with regard to the early church or to individual apostles such as Paul. Far too often, sermons portray the early Christians as if they were the real Christians, as if everyone afterward—with some notable exceptions like Luther, Wesley, or Bonhoeffer—were at best a pale carbon of the real thing. Again and again sermons tell us that in the early church, faith was pure, love pervasive, prayers effective, courage dauntless, and the presence of the Spirit warmed every heart. We are told such things because we are urged to be like the early Christians. Actually, of course, we are already more like the early Christians than we ought to be." [33]

In the Penguin Classics Saint Augustine Confessions, Augustine's words about praise and being worthy of the Lord Majesty is intriguing in that he asks the question,

> Can any praise be worthy of the Lord's majesty? How magnificent his strength! How inscrutable his wisdom! Man is one of your creatures, Lord, and his instinct is to praise you. He bears about him the mark of death, the sign of his own sin, to remind him that you thwart the proud. But still, since he is a part of your creation, he wishes to praise you. The thought of you stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you. Grant me, Lord, to know and understand whether a man is first to pray to you for help or to praise you, and whether he must know you before he can call you to his aid. If he does not know you, how can he pray to you? For he may call for some other help, mistaking it for yours.[34]

St. Augustine's Confessions shed light on the understanding of original sin and his methodology and epistemology for equality in the world. The social issues that plague our community today are the same problems that Augustine addressed in his day. There must be a theological transformative change for social justice. One of the most profound statements of Augustine's Confession was when he stated, I'm in love with love, which brought about a desire

[33] Ibid, 103.

[34] R. S. Pine-Coffin, *Saint Augustine Confessions, translated with an Introduction*, (London, England, New York: Penguin Books, 1961), 21.

to teach people about the city of God. Unfortunately, many people have embraced evil temptations to bring selfish gain, to have power, to control and oppress people of faith.

In modern history, God still holds us responsible for the way we treat people. There are a multitude of people in history who followed the teachings of Jesus and made great sacrifices in order to help the poor or the underprivileged. One of those individuals is Mother Teresa, who was born in Skopje, Macedonia and began her missionary work with the poor in 1948. In 1950, she started a congregation that became the Missionaries of Charity. Their mission was to care for the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, and all people who felt unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that had become a burden to society and was shunned by everyone. Today the Missionaries of Charity run hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis. The charity also offered assistance through soup kitchens, children's and family counseling programs, orphanages and schools.

Unfortunately, when we think of people like Mussolini and Adolph Hitler, we are reminded that freedom will never be given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the victims of evil oppression. The mental sickness of evil thinkers always results in social and political injustice; therefore, the community of Christian faith must stand against such evil, because silence breeds consent.

When the industrialization of apartheid in South Africa created social injustice, Nelson Mandela, did not conform to the status-quo. As an activist, he addressed the injustice of apartheid and strived for justice and equality for the citizens who were disenfranchised. Nelson Mandela was the active voice for conscious social change and as a result he was unjustly imprisoned for twenty-seven years for his stand for social justice. The faith and love that Mandela possessed resulted in his election as President of South Africa. He then became a

resounding voice for social equality for all South Africans. During Nelson Mandela's tenure, Bishop Desmond Tutu became the theologian supporting Mandela in his stand against apartheid.

In The Rainbow People of God, Tutu refers to God's faithfulness to the Jews during the Exodus saying, "God took the side of the oppressed, the poor, the exploited, not because they were holier or morally better than their oppressors. No, God was on their side simply and solely because they were oppressed." For social justice, Desmond Tutu's vision: "Is of a South Africa that is totally non-racial…a new South Africa, a free South Africa, where all of us, Black and white together, will walk tall; where all of us, Black and white together, will hold hands as we stride forth on the Freedom March to usher in the new South Africa where people will matter because they are human beings made in the Image of God."

Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of India's non-violent movement and social change, spent twenty years working to better Indians' rights in South Africa. Gandhi learned about Indian grievances, studied the law, wrote letters to officials, and organized petitions. He became well-known for his activism and in a few short years, became leader of the Indian community in South Africa. He was assassinated for his stance for social change.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., drawing inspiration from both his Christian faith and the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, led a nonviolent movement in the late 1950's and 1960's to achieve legal equality for African-Americas in the United States. Martin Luther King's father changed his middle name from Michael to Luther, because he was inspired by Martin Luther of Germany who wrote the *Ninety-Five Thesis*. Martin Luther, the father of Protestantism addressed the infidelity and abuse of priest who molested choir boys in the Catholic Church, took a stand against this injustice and as a result, the protestant church was established. While others were advocating for freedom by 'any means necessary' including violence, Martin Luther King, Jr.

used the power of words and act of nonviolent resistance, such as protest, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience to achieve seemingly-impossible goals. He went on to lead similar campaigns against poverty and international conflict, always maintaining fidelity to his principles that men and women everywhere, regardless of color or creed, are equal members of the human family.

Just as Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated for his stance for social change, likewise, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert Kennedy, and Medgar Evers were assassinated; Jesus of Nazareth was crucified and it was all for their stance for the equality of humanity .

The author holds the position, whenever people embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, the evil forces in this ungodly society plot for their demise; however, ambassadors of Christ must continue to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One such modern ambassador is Gardner Calvin Taylor, an American preacher, noted for his eloquence and deep understanding of Christian faith and theology. In his book: The Words of Gardner Taylor addresses 'Why Modern Man Needs The Gospel'.

> "What pride we have in ourselves! We need no supernatural help, for we ourselves are as gods and we can find the right answers in our own wisdom. We are able to implement and execute those right answers out of our own personal enlightenment. We may tolerate religion, but we sense no desperate, life-and-death need of Jesus Christ. Our faith rests in ourselves. We are like the ancient Romans to whom Paul refers in the words of our text. Old Rome had everything—except God as manifest in Jesus Christ."[35]

Gardner Taylor believed for effective ministry, ministers should thoroughly know the Bible and always have a newspaper for relevant events. The sermons of Gardner C. Taylor were

[35] Gardner C. Taylor, *The Words of Gardner Taylor, Sermons from the Middle Years, 1970 – 1980*, Volume 2. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000), 118.

unique in that they addressed the new generation. In the words of Gardner Taylor's book, he addresses the past as the preparation for the future.

> Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." (I Samuel 7:12) … If life is to make sense, yesterday's experience must have to do with today's living. We are to gain confidence for today by what happened yesterday. Sad, indeed, is our human plight if we have to start off each day proving everything as if we had had no experiences yesterday. Sad indeed, if we have to test fire each day to see if it burns as it did yesterday. Many a love affair has failed because one or both of the partners demanded daily proof of the other's love and devotion.[36]

Therefore, he became a model in Christian leadership and provided relevant teachings in the Black Church transformative development, which transcend not only to the Black community, but to all of God's people. Gardner Taylor also addresses "A Prayer for Spiritual Vision":

> "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, And say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. Ad he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight, (Mark 10:47-51)"[37]

Like Gardner Taylor, the author strongly believes that there must be consistent prayer for spiritual vision. To achieve theological transformation in the West Florence community, because there are still those individuals, politically, who attempt to trap people from achieving greatness. According to Mark 10:47-51, the Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus with tricky questions concerning social ethics based upon their beliefs. They treated women as property, and marriage and divorce were regarded as transactions similar to buying and selling land. They criticized Jesus for spending too much time with the wrong type of people who they considered to be less

[36] Ibid, 17, 18.
[37] Ibid, 43.

as society throwaways. They wanted to be sure that they would have a place in the kingdom, they were prejudice and self-righteous. This is to say that we must never marginalize God's great love for the poor and the disenfranchised.

In Mark 10:47: "When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus from Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" This was the proper way of addressing Jesus as the Messiah. He was a descendant of King David. (Isaiah 9:7) Bartimaeus recognized Jesus Christ as Messiah and this resulted in Christ healing him. When we believe and accept Jesus Christ, Lordship, as Messiah, theological transformation and healing takes place. To achieve effective theological transformation the author holds that effective prayer for spiritual vision, results in effective ministry. "As Bartimaeus prayed for physical sight, so we need to pray for spiritual vision to see ourselves. We carry a false notion of what we look like spiritually as we do of what we look like physically. Physically we think sometimes that we look like the models in the ads. I know that some people would not put on the clothes they do if they knew how they look in them. I have seen aging men with bad feet trying to wear western heels and ladies in jeans who should have picked up their money and run from counters where such clothing was being sold. Some of who think we are witty when we are only nasty, correct when we are only corrupt, brilliant when we are only vulgar, smart when we are only stupid. Poor Robert Burns's prayer might well be on our lips:

> 'O wad some Power the giftie gie us, To see oursels as others see us!
> It wad frae monie a blunder free us, An foolish notion…"

We need to see ourselves as we are."[38] The author holds that our personal identity should be in a context that should reflect Godliness and holiness because the Bible teaches that we should present our bodies as a holy and living sacrifice unto the Lord.

[38] Ibid, 46-47.

James Hal Cone (born August 5, 1938) is an American theologian best known for his advocacy of Black liberation theology. His 1969 book Black Theology and Black Power provide a new way to articulate the distinctiveness of theology in the Black church."[39]

Cone's work was influential from the time of the civil rights movement and his work remains influential today. His work has been both utilized and criticized within the African-American theological community and has assisted in cultural development. For example, as Cone's "methodology for answering the questions raised by the African American Experience is a return to Scripture, and particularly to the liberative elements such as the Exodus-Sinai tradition and the life of Jesus. However, Scripture is not the only source which shapes his theology. In response to criticism from other Black theologians (including his brother, Cecil), Cone began to make greater use of resources native to the African American Christian community for his theological work, including slave spirituals, the blues, and the writings of prominent African-American thinkers such as David Walker, Henry McNeal Turner, and W. E. B. DuBois. His theology developed further in response to critiques by black women leading Cone to consider gender issues more prominently and foster the development of womanist theology, and also in dialogue with Marxist analysis and the sociology of knowledge."[40]

"Con's thought, along with Paul Tillich, stresses the idea that theology is not universal, but tied to specific historical contexts. Cone formulates a theology of liberation from within the context of the Black experience of oppression, interpreting the central kernel of the Gospels as

[39] Wikipedia, the free encyclopedis. Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Faith and Public Talk: Critical Essays on James H. Cone's Black Theology and Black Power*. (accessed January 13, 2014).

[40] Ibid, Borrow, *James H. Cone and Black Liberation Theology*; cf. the review by P. Williams, The Journal of Religion 76 (1996), 137-8.

Jesus' identification with the poor and oppressed, the resurrection as the ultimate act of liberation."[41]

The author implemented Cone's concept because of the relevancy with the West Florence struggle for social liberation. To achieve transformation for theological development, the author implemented the teachings of Moses and Luke primarily to show the relevancy of the Love of God and God's providential care throughout the ages for the equality of social liberation, for who the Son of God sets free is free indeed. Along with Cone's concept of liberation theology, the author incorporated other philosophical thinkers, such as, Plato's allegorical cave, the Socrates passion to educate people for self-pride and enlightenment to achieve a more holistic approach for transformative development for social justice. By achieving this goal, the congregant's reaction resulted in a higher respect and honor for the Creator as a God of oneness and diversity, that is to say that God is God of all or not God at all!

Another African American theologian by the name of Samuel DeWitt Proctor was an educator, and humanitarian. He stood for the Civil Rights Movement and was perhaps best known as a mentor and friend of Martin Luther King, Jr. In The Substance of Things Hoped for: A Memoir of African-American Faith, he talks about the New Emancipation stating,

> Together, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., became the defining moment for real social change in America. Their witness was the zenith of the long struggle for full emancipation. Some secular critics said King was naïve to believe that a reservoir of white good will existed out there somewhere. They could not conceive of change without bloodshed and wholesale killing. But Martin recognized that our very existence in a free society, with its accent on equality, derived from the ultimate victory of the One who died on a Roman cross with a crown of weeds and thistles on his brow. Martin was right. He believed that in order to achieve a moral end our movement had to be morally correct.[42]

[41] Ibid, E. Antonio, "Black Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, ed. C. Rowland, (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 64-83.

[42] Samuel DeWitt Proctor, *The Substance of things Hoped For: A Memoir of African-American Faith,* (New York, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995, 1999), 73.

The author embraced Dr. King's views concerning the injustice toward people of color knowing that injustice anywhere was truly a threat to justice everywhere.

Proctor's Sermons from the Black Pulpit was incorporated into the context at Majority Missionary Baptist Church to enlighten the congregants in the author's weekly sermons to educating them of social injustice. As pastor, the sermon from Proctor's book dealing with 'A New Emancipation' focused upon Proctor's view stating:

> By contrast, people who have a keen interest in race theories generally have some ulterior motive driving them. They propagate theories about a particular group in order to put that group to some advantage or disadvantage. For example, those working hard to prove the genetic inferiority of African Americans may wish to preserve our status and remove us from competition; they may want to exploit us economically; or maybe they simply want to stay in office by appealing to people's worst instincts. Or all three. Today, these people often use code words—like "disadvantaged," or "inner city," or "marginalized," or "underclass," or "high risk," or "poor and underserved"—that allow them to converse freely and appear fair-minded. Every one of those terms means "black." And there seems no end to it."[43]

The pastor evaluated the effectiveness of Proctor's views included in his weekly sermons. This outcome inspired the author to continue the series from Samuel Proctor's book, "My Moral Odyssey". This was necessary because many of the congregants seemed to be deceived to think after the election of our first African American President Barack Hussein Obama, II that America would be more loving, showing social justice for all citizens; unfortunately there was more deception and deceit. In Proctor's book, he addresses "The Nature Of Genuine Community".

> Genuine community is perhaps more readily understood when we compare it with a kind of community that is more superficial than genuine. For example, every weekend in the fall and winter we gather by the millions before television screens and in our massive athletic stadiums and arenas to witness our favorite teams in

[43] Ibid, 187.

> combat. It is common to see thousands of white fans fanatically cheering at a basketball game with ten black players knocking each other down. Those throngs look like the signs of community. They transcend race, class, and national origin. But the whole purpose of their togetherness is far too trivial to be called community."[44]

As a result, members were mobilized to move forward in achieving equality not only for themselves but for all who were oppressed. To achieve an effective outcome the author incorporated contextual hermeneutics using theological, historical, and biblical foundations that manifest the Word of God addressing social injustice.

The author realizes that preaching really means nothing but reciting a Bible story unless it is made relevant to the present needs. In the West Florence Community, the members of Majority Missionary Baptist Church have committed themselves to engage in effective ministry addressing the social injustices in urban communities. It is indicative of us to thoroughly research to better understand the needs of the community. Our vision statement is the ideal destination of our ministry. Our mission statement is the core purpose of our ministry's existence. It is our compelling commitment that describes who we are, what we do, and where we do it! As the church (*Ecclesia*), it is where we are going and where we will be ideally, in transforming the lives of the disenfranchised in the West Florence Community. Our purpose is witnessing to let people know who we are, as servants of the Most High God.

The author understands the ecclesia is the called out assembly that makes the church. Therefore, we must understand that people cannot build the church, the church builds people by meeting them at their point of growth. God has placed Majority in the urban community of West Florence, South Carolina to minister to families and friends. To achieve this mission, the author knew when to move from exegesis to hermeneutical social contextualization; "it takes the village

[44] Samuel Proctor, *My Moral Odyssey,* Foreword by Bill Moyers. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1989), 147, 148.

to raise a child, and the church to raise the village". The author's purpose was to mobilize his congregants with the understanding of knowing, symbolically, that people do not follow a parked car. We must be faithful in all areas of our lives and by so doing, God empowers us with the gift of the Holy Spirit that transforms Christians to achieve the great commission as faithful ambassadors of Christ. Further, the author understands that people will not catch what the leader has not caught; it is a fact that title alone will not get the job done, but courage, faith, and commitment will lead us to achieve our Godly mission. It is imperative to implement the theological, biblical, and historical foundations that are appropriate for achieving theological transformation for social urban ministries.

Theological Foundation

The author holds this position of reformed theology: The Reformation is the movement in history, beginning in 1517, which broke up the institutional unity of the church in Western Europe and established the third great branch of Christianity, called Protestantism, which was and is centered on the absolute and sufficient authority of the Bible and on justification by faith alone. The term reformers refers to the leaders of the revolt against Catholicism, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Bucer, Cranmer, and others would merit this title, as would Anabaptists such as Menno Simons. The term Protestant refers to any member of the original group that "protested" against the Catholic Church and actually separated from it, and any member of that group of churches or their modern descendants. The term was first used in 1529 when a group of German noblemen "protested" at the Diet of Speyer. "Luther's first lectures in 1513-15 were on the Psalms. He worked diligently and lectured on the, faithfully taking up the Psalms in numerical sequence. The study of the Twenty-second Psalm brought illumination. This Psalm begins with the words which Christ quoted upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Luther was suddenly arrested by that word forsaken as he had been by the lightning on that July afternoon. Christ forsaken! What could this mean? Forsaken, abandoned, alienated and estranged from God? That was precisely the way Luther felt. Christ had experienced all this too, but why? Luther knew why he felt forsaken. God is pure, man is impure. God is strong, man is weak."[45]

"The Five Solas (Five_Solas) of the Protestant Reformation, while not unique to Calvinism, are integral to a Calvinist theological perspective and therefore bear stating here:

- Sola Fide (Sola_Fide) – by faith alone, in specific reference to Justification (Justification).
- Sola Scriptura (Sola_Scriptura) – by the Scriptures alone, in reference to authority.

[45] Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*. Foreword by Jaroslav Pelikan. (Boston:Beacon Press, 1952), 34.

- Solus Christus (Solus_Christus) – by Christ alone, as our sole mediator and intercessor before God.
- Sola gratia (Sola_gratia) – by grace alone, in reference to salvation (Salvation).
- Soli Deo Gloria (Soli_Deo_gloria)- to God alone the glory."[46]

"The Reformed Tradition and practice of social and political involvement was carried to America, where those in the Reformed tradition have taken a considerable part in such matters. Many in the Presbyterian and Reformed churches were participants in the movement to abolish slavery, and more recently have been prominent in civil rights and similar movements. In South Africa the Reformed tradition had long been involved in support of racial apartheid policies and their application until recently, but this has now changed as some of the Reformed elements within the country and Reformed churches outside, through agencies such as the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, put pressure on South African churches to change their attitudes. The change in government policy has also forced the issue."[47] For this cause, the author embraces the Reformed Theology of justification, salvation and predestination knowing that the Almighty is no respecter of any people. It is imperative for people to understand that they are loved to love. To achieve the work of kingdom building, the church must become the physical presence of Christ.

"The visible church is a congregation of true and faithful persons who have gained Christian fellowship with each other, who have given themselves to the Lord and to one another, and who have agreed to abide by Godly discipline. Jesus Christ is the great head of the Church and the only Law Giver. The government of the Church is with the body, and is the privilege of each individual. The discipline of the Church is intended for the reclaiming of those Christians

[46] *New Covenant Theology – Theopedia*, an encyclopedia of Biblical Chri… http://www.theopedia.com/New_Covenant_Theology.

[47] Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1984), 999.

who may be disorderly either in principle or practice, and must be faithfully kept for God's glory, peace and unity of the Churches.

Definition of the Word "Church" The word "Ek Klesia," translated Church, is defined as thus: a religious assembly selected. Hence it denotes an assembly summoned for called out, a select body separated from the mass of the people. The word "Ek Klesia" is used in the New Testament one hundred and fifteen times. Of these instances two relate to the Hebrew "congregation of The Lord," three of them relate to the Greek Assembly, and one hundred and ten to the Christian Church. (Acts 7:38; Ephesians 5:24, 25; Hebrews 12.) The distinctive body of Christians is the Church. The Church has also been defined as a religious assembly, selected and called out of the world by the Doctrine of the Gospel, to worship God according to His Word. (I Corinthians 1; Revelations 2:7.)."[48]

The mission of the church, according to Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised*."*[49] Here, Jesus Christ shows us how to minister to the sick, afflicted, poor, the oppressed, the outcast and the downtrodden. The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Thus, the rationale is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Lord of all. The author holds the position from the protestant perspective according to Luther's 'Justification by Faith', Calvin's 'Predestination' and Wesleyan 'Free Will'. Based upon Calvin's doctrine on sin

[48] *Discipline of the Primitive Baptist Church, Fourth Revised Edition.* (Tallahassee, Florida: National Primitive Baptist Publishing Board, 1963), 7 – 8.

[49] *The Holy Bible, The KJV Minister's Bible, King James Version*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, LLC, 2005), Luke 4:18.

he states: “Humanity’s nature is deformed; yet their soul bares the image of God.[50] “We must speak of the creation of man, because among all of God’s creation man is the noblest and most remarkable example of his justice, wisdom, and goodness, as stated at the beginning.”[51] “We cannot have a clear and complete knowledge of God unless it is accompanied by a corresponding knowledge of ourselves. This knowledge is twofold which addresses before and after the fall of Adam.”[52]

The Almighty wants us to recognize God’s image in all people. Evil is; therefore, understood as an act of disobedience when we ignore God’s commandments for our own selfish desires. Original sin happened in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve which resulted in the fall of humanity.

The United Methodist Book of Discipline, Article VII - addresses original or birth sin as, “Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.”[53]

The Bible teaches except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. In his own strength, without Divine Grace, man cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God. Christians believe when influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit we can exercise holy righteousness and be reconciled to God.

[50] *Calvin: Institutes of The Christian Religion*, 183 (Louisville) The Westminster Press, MCMLX.

[51] Calvin, Cf. I. 1; I. v. 2-3; I.xv. 1; II. Viii. 1.

[52] Ibid, Calvin, 183.

[53] Ronald P. Patterson, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1988*, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 68.

The Bible answers the question concerning the nature of humanity by pointing to the *Imago Dei,* the image of God, whose purpose for humanity was designed to bear God's image. Although this image was sullied by sin, it was restored by divine salvation. Hebrew-Christian Theology frames the doctrine of the image in the setting of divine creation and redemption. The Greek terms *eikōn* and *homoiōsis* affirm with scripture that humanity was fashioned in the image of God, and Jesus Christ is the divine Son who is the essential image of the invisible God. Hebrew 1:3, states *"*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"[54] Jesus is the exact representation of God, but Jesus is God. God is Eternal; Jesus worked with the Father in creating the world. Jesus Christ is the complete expression of God in a human body. God's ultimate goal for us is to make us like Christ. As Christians become more like Jesus they discover their true selves.

The image of God in reformed theology, is revealed in Christ. Some believe this perspective means that before the beginning of the world, God chose certain people to receive the gift of salvation. Others believe that God knew in advance who would respond, and upon those God has predestined; God chose them. This is the doctrine of predestination**.** Calvin confirms, for although God's glory shines forth in the outer man, yet there is no doubt that the proper seat of the image is in the soul.

However, Pietism and the Religious Societies, stating: Puritans often added a typical Calvinist concern for promoting individual piety, which then became typical of many of the nonconformists. The theological grounding for the Puritan interest in morality was, of course, quite different from the common 'moralism' that simply emphasized the necessity of being a

[54] Ibid, Hebrews 1:3.

'good person,' or the 'Arminianism' of the high-Church party that emphasized the necessity of holy living. Both would be charged with relying upon "works-righteousness' for salvation (see Allison). The Calvinists were not promoting 'good works' as such, but rather wanted persons to recognize their 'elect' status and evidence it in their lives, as the human response to God's grace. The Arminian; however, saw the Calvinists view of predestination and election as dispensing with the demands of obedience, leading to "Antinomianism" (anti-legalism) and consequent moral laxity.

The imputation of sin according Romans 5:12 *"*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"[55] How can we be declared guilty for something Adam did thousands of years ago? Many feel it is not fair for God to judge us because of Adam's sin. Yet each of us confirms our heritage with Adam by our own sins every day. We have the same sinful nature and are prone to rebel against God, and we are judged for the sins we commit. Because we are sinners, it is not fairness we need, instead it is mercy.

The Apostle Paul's covenant language in first century Jewish context perspective of justification as a Pharisee was within the law of Judaism, but he was ministering to a Hellenistic community in an attempt to convert them to become Christians. Paul did not deviate from his Jewish roots; however, he used the language that was understandable to the Gentiles that would enlighten them concerning the salvation of Jesus Christ for all humanity. In the book of Romans, we see Paul addressing justification as the very center of his ministry. He was aware that the Israelites were zealous for God, but their zeal was not based on knowledge. It was crucial for Paul to demonstrate the justification of God's act of declaring us "not guilty" for our sins,

[55] *The Holy Bible*, *The KJV Minister's Bible, King James Version.* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, LLC, 2005), Romans 5:12.

making us “right” with God. This definition of justification reveals the redemption of Jesus Christ who paid the price so we can go free. The price of sin is death. Jesus paid the price. The author’s understanding of what Paul is really saying here is that the justification of all believers are granted to us as the result of the great mercies of God through Jesus Christ. The author believed this act of justification is effective in a believer’s conversion and not limited to content only concerning the gospel. God’s eternal plan from the beginning to the eschatological period is achieved through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ to redeem humanity. Therefore, Paul tells us that the gospel he preaches is the one promised beforehand in Holy Scripture. Pauline writing teaches that true redemption follows repentance which leads us into salvation. In other words, Christ set sinners free from slavery to sin. In Old Testament times, a person’s debts could result in his being sold as a slave; however, the next of kin could redeem him by buying his freedom. Theologically, Christ purchased our freedom, and the price was His life.

In light of the new perspective of Paul’s writings of justification, it is the author’s understanding that in the early church, justification did not deal with a person’s faith and religious beliefs with their God, but more so in the eschatological context, it dealt with the future as well as the present, thus it is imperative that we understand God deals with us holistically according to divine sovereignty. God allows man salvation to seek wisdom for a clearer understanding of God’s eternal plan. Justification from the new perspective has many implications from different presuppositions; however, Pauline writings of ‘Justification By Faith’ influenced Martin Luther of Germany in light of his doctrines rooted in ‘Justification By Faith’.

This new perspective addresses the difference between Catholics and Protestants understanding of Paul’s writings on justification. The author has come to understand that each

writer in the new perspective has a different perspective on justification. Paul's view of justification in scripture takes precedence because of the sovereignty of biblical reference. However, the new perspective offers a form that can be somewhat vexing based upon the writers' perspectives. For Paul, the Holy Scripture that addresses justification deals with our horizontal relationship with humanity and our vertical relationship with God. The Apostle Paul also addresses the first century Jewish context of justification in the context of Christian fellowship with Jesus Christ that conforms believers to the righteousness in the present and eschatological covenant. Paul taught justification by faith is not understood by one's work of righteousness alone, but through the atonement of our Lord. Paul placed great emphasis on the fact that we are not saved or justified by simply confessing justification by faith. Believers must be born again and embrace the Christian covenant offered to humanity by God. The author absolutely believes, when we repent of our sins and accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior through conversion, salvation justifies us in the sight of God.

The Post-Reformation Tradition of the Pauline writings has been under attack by some who accused Paul of misinterpreting salvation and justification in the Jewish and Christian communities. However, according to the new perspective, we must understand that the Hebrews understanding of faith and justification was based upon obedience to the Ten Commandments; whereas, the Christians obedience is through the salvation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The author must convince people to understand that this does not mean that we are to break the Old Testament law, but we are to live moral Christian lives in striving to uphold all scripture concerning the promises of the Old and New Testament which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ our Lord. In light of the Jewish practices rooted in the Old Testament laws, they were to honor and observe all commandments. Literally, they believed in the Divine Election. According to John Calvin's Doctrine of Limited Atonement that were developed out of Calvin's five main

doctrines. The five doctrines are conveyed in the acronym: "TULIP." This acronym is defined as the "Total Inability, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Infallible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.[56] This doctrine was inspired and received as the foundational doctrine of the reformed church's teaching. Calvin's doctrine of total hereditary depravity addressed original sin as the result of Adam and Eve's disobedient act in the Garden of Eden which resulted in a sinful nature within man. For Calvin, God's plan of redemption and predestination of a limited atonement for the deliverance of a certain election of people was predetermined by God. The Doctrine of Limited Atonement focuses on an "irresistible grace," which is for those persons who have been predestined by faith in their conversion through the death and resurrection of Christ. For Calvin, those who are not in the predestined will of God are lost; therefore, the Limited Atonement of Christ's redemptive blood is limited to those who are predestined. Based upon this view, one might automatically think of God as a respecter of certain persons, and ask the following question. Why did God create me to suffer in eternal damnation? If God is love, why would God allow Paul to write in the book of Romans 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."[57] Revelation 1:8 declares "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."[58] In light of these two biblical passages, Calvin may have interpreted them under the inspiration of knowing that all people would not confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

[56] Calvin, John, *Doctrine of Limited Atonement.*

[57] *The Holy Bible, KJV Minister's Bible, King James Version*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers LLC, 2005), Romans 10:9.

Calvin's Doctrine of Limited Atonement is on sound theological interpretation. Christians must never under estimate God's infinite wisdom and omnipotence. God is certainly able and willing to save all humanity. In this passage, God is the greatest being who has extended the greatest invitation to the greatest company, whosoever, to accept Jesus Christ as the Savior of humanity. We see again the great invitation of Christ extended to all. "Whosoever will let him come," Unfortunately, we must say there are those who have and who will reject Christ as Lord.

Calvin's Doctrine of Limited Atonement is not taught in the Bible, we must remember, scripture produces doctrine by comparison and contrast. Christian doctrine must follow in the interpretation of scripture for church teaching. Doctrine is that source which the early Church fathers received from theological inspirations. Romans 1:6 confirms that God's desire is that everyone should come to salvation; however, in other Pauline writings, only those who believe in Christ will receive salvation.

The Doctrine of Limited Atonement may have developed in Calvin's theological studies primarily out of the writing of the Pauline passages on the topic of predestination. According to Roman 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren."[59] Paul's writings explained that God foreknew, this interpretation of God's election is predestined for those individuals who have repented of their sins for God's gift of salvation. Calvin seems to hold to this view based upon God's knowledge of future events. People do not determine God's Election: instead, God chose those who would be saved out of one's own free will. However, there are those who believe that in God's infinite Wisdom, God knew beforehand those who would respond in faith.

[59] *The Holy Bible, The KJV Minister's Bible, King James Version.* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers, LLC, 2005), Romans 8:29.

According to both points-of-view, only God can save people. Believers must understand one cannot earn salvation through works alone. The Apostle Paul teaches, believers should not evaluate Christ or anyone else, according to the flesh, because usually that is the way most people typically evaluate each other. In both Pauline references, God allowed Jesus Christ to die for all, II Corinthians 5:14-15. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the true authority and only source of eternal salvation to those who obey and accept Him as Lord and Savior.

II Corinthians 5:14-15 reflects upon a clear message showing the grace of God as an unmerited grace of salvation, be it in the context of predestination or God's unmerited grace for salvation. Calvin's Doctrine of Limited Atonement also reflects upon the theological foundation of Paul's writing in the books of Romans and II Corinthians, as well. The implications of Calvin's doctrine here reflect stronger biblical principles of God's pre-election that results in a limited atonement. The question; pertaining to the unconditional election of certain people who will be saved, and others lost, must be addressed theologically to validate the Limited Atonement Doctrine. To better understand "Limited Atonement" from scriptural implications that support Calvin's doctrine, a review of Psalm 78:41, "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and "limited" the Holy One of Israel."[60] In this passage, the author points to a certain group of rebellious people whom God showered with blessings and later they provoked God with their contempt and ingratitude. Scriptures support that only those who obeyed God will receive favor for eternal life.

The above scriptures theologically support the ideal biblical interpretation of a certain number or election which Calvin's Doctrine of Limited Atonement addresses. Calvin's Doctrine seems to flow theologically with not only certain Pauline writings, but John's gospel as well.

[60] Ibid, Psalm 78:41.

Calvin's inspired study in developing limited atonement clearly reflects in his exegetical analysis which confirms in Christ's words spoken in scripture concerning those who God had foreknown and predestinated to be saved in Christ's high priestly prayer. With this theological explanation of biblical interpretation, the unfolding of Calvin's Doctrine seems to reinforce his five main doctrines, TULIP, for explaining each stage of humanities fall from original sin and the reconciliation of God's election for eternal salvation. To gain a better understanding of a doctrine, one must learn the language. Calvin's five main doctrines are known as the complete doctrine of the Reformed Church. Calvin's overall doctrine teaching focuses upon: 1) man's total depravity, 2) predestination and unconditional election, 3) limited atonement, Christ died for predestined people, 4) infallible grace an irresistible grace to convert, 5) perseverance of the saints. The Origin of Atonement for Sin was provided by the death and resurrection of Christ. There is no other theological explanation that could explain why God reconciled believers by Jesus Christ.

In Calvin's atonement doctrine, he teaches us that Christ's representation and substitution for humanity was His atoning work for those who are in God's election. According to Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:45-49, the Apostle Paul's writings is the contrast between the first Adam, fallen and Christ the Second Adam, represents the two heads and two races of people. Sin and death came by the first Adam "by way of one man's sin, all have sin and fallen short of the glory of God." Christ as the Second Adam who represented a new race of converted people brought about redemption. Unfortunately, there are those who reject the call of Christ. This same scripture affirms the doctrine of limited atonement based upon one's response to Christ. John Calvin's "Limited Atonement" presents a sound interpretation of God's people who are called and predestined to do ministry for the Lord, and there is certainly a "Limited Atonement." However, we do not know the exact number because God has not revealed that number, as was

revealed the one hundred and forty-four thousand. Calvin's Doctrine of Limited Atonement was and is a sound theological teaching for church doctrine which is based upon scripture. In the scripture there is deliverance, redemption, and the promise of everlasting life to whosoever; however, there is the warning of condemnation to all who fail to believe in Jesus Christ. Calvin's doctrine holds true, resulting in a "Limited Atonement" of those God foreknew in God's election before the foundations of the world was created.

In the Hellenistic culture, the Jewish community was concerned with all of the ceremonial as well as moral and dietary laws being honored in the Gentile culture. Paul responds that: it is not what goes in a man, but what comes out of a man; therefore, Paul preached the gospel to the Hellenistic community with the understanding that Christ fulfilled the law and the promise of the Old Testament for all people. Paul, further, addresses the Jewish concept of divine election letting the Jewish community know that God is no respecter of persons. Paul understood that Jesus fulfilled the need for reconciliation of the entire human race. Paul affirmed there was no distinction between the Jew and the Greek for Paul affirmed that the same Lord is great in mercy and forgiveness to all who confess and repent of their sins.

According to Pietism and Puritanism, the author reviewed the English Puritan doctrines concerning the church and Wesley's doctrinal views point out that:

> "Pietism and Puritanism: The stream perhaps most noticeable to Wesley's contemporaries was the influence of seventeenth-century continental Pietism and the parallel movement of English Puritanism. The Methodists had in common with Pietists the sense of being an ecclesiola—a small church—within the ecclesia—the established church. Gatherings of Pietists were small, usually in someone's home, and comprised of scripture reading, prayer, and exhortation to good works. Members of the ecclesiola contined to attend their parish for the sacraments and other ministrations of the church."[61]

[61] Thomas Edward Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*, Updated Edition. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 55.

When we look at Wesley's three-part formula of rules, we see that humanity should do good and not evil. This can be done by living a just life that would bring about integrity and peace in the world; humanity should honor God.

When we follow Albert Outler's quadrilateral, we can see clearly his statement, True Experience as described in the quadrilateral, comes from devotion to the church and to the task of making disciples for Christ Jesus. Tradition simply entails following the pattern of ministry already established by the Church Fathers. Wesley looked at two distinct strands of tradition: the primitive church of Christian antiquity, and the early Church of England. Among Wesley's most distinctive appeals to an Anglican tradition was his insistence that the Methodist Movement was a revival of apostolic faith that he found in scripture. Tradition must be based upon the teaching of Christ. Wesley also defines tradition as the word remembered because people hunger for tradition; therefore, tradition is not dead. Tradition is the community which rescues us from narrow reading of God's Word. There are those who believe we all need a broader view, which allows us to experience the Word of God beyond our personal thought alone. Wesley believed we cannot study scripture alone and come to a pure absolute conclusion, because we are not objective. There are times when objective thinking may have other connotations. Tradition is the history of God's interaction with humanity; whereas, Methodism is committed to the unity and Catholicity of Christianity.

Wesley's appeal concerning experience is both private and experiential within our community. The theological worldview of experiences is complex and if not closely rooted within its proper context could result in an ambiguous thought. Wesley addresses that our Christian teaching does not merely reflect on the past or some distant data, instead it seeks to integrate the story of faith within believers. Experience in this context is understood as a means

of bringing scripture within the community of faith. Our theological task in light of experience, as described in the quadrilateral, comes from devotion to the church and the task of making disciples for Christ.[62] "Experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine which is not founded in scripture."

Reason involves the application of one's critical understanding and appreciation of scripture. Reason is more than just memorizing scripture or memorizing mere literal religion. It is the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. Reason is based upon thought and all people have the ability of thinking, rationalizing, and emphasizing ones thoughts by reasoning to a conclusion; however, reason has limits as well. Reason involves the application of one's critical understanding and appreciation of scripture. Reason is never the source of knowledge; it is only a way to process information that originates in experience, tradition or scripture. Wesley held his intellect and its use of reason in high esteem. Reason does the following: 1) we read and interpret scripture, 2) we determine whether our Christian witness is clear, 3) we ask questions of faith and seek to understand God's action, and will. 4) we organize the understanding that compose our witness and render them internally coherent, 5) we test the congruence of our witness to the Biblical testimony and to the tradition that mediate that testimony to us, and 6) we relate our witness to the full range of human knowledge, experience, and service.[63] This prospective teaches us that reason cannot produce faith, hope, or love; conversely, reason within the context of scripture can lead one towards faith, hope, and love.

The author’s context for social and political change began in the New York and New Jersey metropolitan urban communities which influenced him to strive to achieve equality and

[62] Jones, page 139, *Our Theological Task*

[63] Jones, page 140.

justice for all people. He supports the nature and mission of the church and its primary tasks today is built on Christ. The church is the Body of Christ known only to God and yet is manifested in visible forms.

The mission of the church, according to Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*"*[64] Here, Jesus Christ shows us how to minister to the sick, afflicted, poor, the oppressed, the outcast and the downtrodden. The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Thus, the rationale is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Lord of all.

The fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world is the vision scripture holds before us. Christians must spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to remind the world of God's love and saving grace. This mission must be accomplished through witnessing by word and deed, sharing the gospel with all people. All of this must be done in the community and the world at large. Our primary task is to engage in the struggle for justice and reconciliation for all humanity, regardless of race, creed, culture or national background.

The task of the church today is to be an avenue where the community of believers can come together to pray, strategize, and plan to meet the needs of people at their point of growth. The church is a body of believers, united together by a common faith in Jesus Christ. Its mission is to bring back the Kingdom of God to earth, by reaching out with love, care, hope, and words of eternal life. We must continue to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and provide opportunities for others with the hope that they, too, encounter by faith, the Divine Grace of God in Christ.

[64] *The Holy Bible, The KJV Minister's Bible, King James Version*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, LLC, 2005), Luke 4:18.

The author has gained a clearer understanding of theological, social and political philosophy that embraces multicultural precepts and understands this as the church's theological task. To achieve theological transformation, one must obey Christ's instructions and study to effectively present oneself as a faithful servant of the gospel.

Christians are called to live a disciplined life that affirms the theological principles of Christ, by letting their light shine that men may see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven. The church holds the living core to Christian faith as revealed in scripture, that illuminates one's tradition, personal experiences, and reason. Through Scripture the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace.

According to John Wesley, scripture carries the deep truth. When the literal sense of scripture is bound in a cultural context or is contradicted by other scripture, then its truth must be discovered beneath the literal surface. The Doctrine of Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience are the sources and norms for Christian Belief and Practice, moreover, scripture being the primary authority. As for Wesley, the authority of Scripture is the written and inspired word of God proclaiming the true revelation of Jesus Christ. Scripture reveals Christ in His Deity, confirming Jesus pre-incarnated and carnated existence. Christ became the logos, Living word. Scripture reveals the light of biblical revelation of God's revealing divinity in a moment of history in scripture. The Church affirms that there can be very little serious historical debate that the central source of all Christian teaching was not based upon scripture.

The Holy scripture is the word of God written to contain all books of the Old and New Testaments, and these scriptures were given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.[65] In early Methodism, the statement concerning the Holy scripture proclaimed that the Holy

[65] Jones, pg. 130.

scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. Wesley's theological view on the authority of scripture gives us the greatest reason for the Bible in worship and ministry.

The result of original sin separated man from God, and the need for redemption required the need for divine grace. Theologically, understanding evil as an act of disobedience when we deliberately break God's commandments, we have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God. The Bible teaches believers about the result of original sin that took place in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve which resulted in the fall of humanity. The devil's temptation through the serpent deceived Eve and Adam. Furthermore, the devil continues to deceive humanity today. Based upon scripture, humanity is in a fallen state as a result of original sin, and we are all in need of forgiveness, as well as reconciliation to God. Humanity could not pay the debt; therefore, God became the incarnate Word. Our humanity depravity is shown in human pride when we seek our desires before honoring God. Humanity would have no hope of redemption if God did not love the world.

The Kingdom of Heaven began when God entered into history as man, but the Kingdom of Heaven will not be fully realized until all evil is judged and removed. This means, there already exists a spiritual reality in the hearts of humans. Those who allow Jesus to control their lives show it in their daily actions. In its outward form, the Kingdom of God will come with the Second Advent of Christ. Through Christ, we are able to see the power of God through miracles, salvation, and conversation. The Kingdom of God; therefore, can be seen and heard in the Lord's Prayer. We live in a world today which is far from what the Kingdom of God should be, we are, nevertheless, fellow workers with God. We are a part of this Kingdom when we allow

our lives to be submitted to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God's only offer of salvation and reconciliation to God from the evil that exist in the world today. When we sing or hear John Newton's hymn, "Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound," it is a reminder of God's Divine Grace that looks beyond our faults, and see our need.

God reconciles all believers with the gifts of Christian unity which opens the door of faith to interact with people, particularly those in the community of godly faith which help us to understand God's plan of family procreation, church, and community leadership. God's divine gift of conversion in Christ and gift of the Holy Spirit enlightens Christians to strive for perfection. God's plan for redemption when all other sacrificial offerings would not atone, God, Himself, entered into human history as recorded in scripture.

In the scriptures, Jesus refers to himself as the "Resurrection and The Life," Christ proclaimed He will come again and the dead in Christ shall rise first and meet Him in the air. This gives all believers of Christ hope for new life eternal in the General Resurrection. This is the goal of all Christians to inherit an everlasting state of complete peace, joy, and happiness with Christ. In this eternal state of everlasting joy, all the redeemed souls come into Christian fellowship, and there will be no more suffering, heartaches, or pain because our mortal body will put on immortality. Eternal life begins here and contains even now the promise of unbelievingly greater things. It is a life of peace and joy, and it is lived in an intimate association with Christ. Eternal life is one of no suffering, obstacles, or bewilderment. It is not merely a matter of the immortality of influence of which so many speak.

The author's passion for theological transformation and social justice in urban communities, is rooted within the teachings of Jesus Christ that results in dignity and respect for all humanity. As a result of striving to develop a very precise document, the author engaged in

connecting the biblical, historical and theological interpretations based upon the resource materials used to address the social injustices for his context.

From the biblical perspective, in the third chapter of the book of Exodus, the Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians. Pharaoh was a harsh taskmaster causing the children of Israel to live in fear and under substandard human living conditions. God called Moses to be Israel's liberator for the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. The commandments given to Moses at Mount Sinai, informed the Israelites to honor and serve God, faithfully. This Old Testament scripture can be parallel to the enslavement of African Americans who were brought to this country through the middle passage into an environment of suffering and degradation.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

"Hypothesis is an interpretation of a practical situation or condition taken as the ground for action."[1] The author implemented "ethnography: a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational and interview data (Creswell, 2007b). The research process is flexible and typically evolves contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999)."[2] The demographics of the urban communities in West Florence, South Carolina reflected a high rate of poverty and crime. Social discrimination among many of the citizens resulted in mental illness. This is to say, where there is a lack of compassion and support, people suffer. With these present challenges, many of the citizens have an inferiority complex and feel there is no hope because of injustice politically, socially and economically. This attitude stigmatized the growth in the urban community of West Florence.

The author's research method focused upon "case studies which are strategies of inquiry in which the researcher identified the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a

[1] *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, Inc. 1983), 594.

[2] John W. Creswell, *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd Edition. (Los Angeles-London-New Delhi-Singapore: Sage, 2009), 13.

philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). In this process, the researcher brackets or set aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993)."[3] Further, the author collected necessary data for instrumentation towards measuring his congregants self-esteem for the project.

The treatment began with transformative learning by teaching individuals not to conform to the injustice of society, but be transformed by the renewing of their minds. To achieve this goal, effective, holistic ministries were implemented for theological, philosophical, and political representation. The church implemented programs and served as the catalyst to reach the masses beyond the walls of the local church. As a result of the contextual problems of this project, was resolved by meeting people at their point of growth.

To measure, the author organized within the group individuals who effectively participated by measuring their personal self-esteem and willingness to engage in transformative development. These individuals were each given the abstract and responded in a didactic session. Each individual agreed to write out his or her dream anonymously and the group would read each other's dream, and the group would discuss these dreams and at the appropriate time, the individual whose dream was being discussed, would identify themselves; after which the group would work collectively in transforming the dream into a vision and formulate a mission statement that was relevant to Majority's context. Pre and post-test were administered.

The methodology was implemented by using the qualitative method which

[3] Ibid, 13.

consisted of two phases. “In qualitative studies, because of the inductive, evolving methodological design, inquirers may define few terms at the beginning, though may advance tentative definitions. Instead, themes (or perspectives or dimensions) may emerge through the data analysis.”[4]

Phase one established inclusive worship liturgy that inspired all people, and convert non-believers to become active in the community of faith. Additionally, the worship experience should continue to impact congregants as Missionaries of Christ demonstrating the love of God for all humanity. The music was appropriate for contemporary worshipers. Phase two was the qualitative evaluation which administered pre-test and post-tests. This allowed the examiner to assess the qualitative configuration case study that surveyed the course of the program. The expected outcome was to adopt a social program for the West Florence urban community that addressed an issue within this context.

It is imperative that church leaders strive to maintain a theologically safe environment for worship. All facilities needed to be ready to effectively minister to all congregants. The facilities included the educational department, the children’s nursery, feeding ministries, transitional ministries for battered women and teenage pregnancy awareness, brotherhood, homeless ministries, food banks and inclusive and ecumenical outreach ministries. The logistics for effective ministry is the key for transforming lives. We acknowledge that Christ offers all people not only eternal life, God also meet the needs of people in this present age.

When considering Christians, believers are reminded that Jesus chose the twelve disciples. Jesus taught them and they became well acquainted with one another. Jesus selected three of them, Peter, James and John for special instructions, the Sons of Thunder. This ‘inner circle’ was

4 Ibid, 40.

with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. When God uses us to lead a person to Christ, God also uses us to help the new believer become established in the faith. This happens best in a one-on-one relationship in which a mature Christian helps a new Christian grow spiritually. For example, the relationship between Paul and Onesimus, a runaway slave was possibly influenced to become a Christian through Paul's ministry. On the other hand, a Christian mentor is an experienced person who desires to share his or her experiences and values with others. The biblical relationships that best demonstrate mentoring includes the following: the relationship between Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Naomi and Ruth and Paul and Timothy.

WORSHIP

The author believes, to praise and worship God is an expression of our love. In Isaiah 66:1, God says, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.” God is the Creator of the universe and everything in it, which includes all humanity. How wonderful and amazing is that! The author understands praise and worship is to show profound heartfelt devotion, to have intense love and admiration by expressing one’s gratitude and reverence to the Almighty for loving kindness and tender mercies. In other words, praise and worship go hand in hand.

The author holds, that praising and worshiping God is not about a ritual, or prayer repetition. It’s not about spending a few minutes a day reading our bible or about reciting our wish list on a daily basis. True worship requires total commitment of our body, mind and spirit. It’s about exalting, adoring and acknowledging the God of the Bible. It has nothing to do with religion, but it has everything to do with having an intimate and profound relationship with God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In many instances worship is associated with singing. But there are certainly other types of worship. I believe the most important way to show our devotion to God is through our everyday lives. When we strive to be Christ-like, in loving and serving others, in honoring and glorifying God, then we are truly worshiping God. Psalm 100:2: “Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!” The author holds that God alone is worthy of being worshiped. We are to willingly and joyfully come into God’s presence, not just go through the motions of going to church. We should always remember God’s goodness, loving kindness and tender mercies.

We find the center point of our worship is in the person of Jesus, His suffering on the Cross and His resurrection. We realize that our worship is a declaration of war against Satan. We

worship with our songs and prayers, but also with our acts of mercy, our stewardship, our outreach and our inner-life. We worship as individuals and as a community to build one another up in our common faith. We help all people to mature in personal relationships that exhort, challenge, care and encourage what it means to live as a Christian among adults, students and children. We actively pursue honesty, forgiveness, reconciliation, resolving conflict, bearing one another's burdens, and confession. We simplify life from the world's many distractions to live as a community intended for God's purposes. We actively pursue understanding and using the spiritual gifts with which we have been endowed. We celebrate together the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion as symbols of our unity with Christ and with each other.

We teach the Bible as God's Divine Word. We equip adults, students, and children to study the Bible for themselves and to learn how to apply it's teachings to conform thoughts, motives, deeds and goals to better serve Jesus. We study the Word of God to become equipped for relationships, ministry and worship. We encounter God as the Holy Scriptures is revealed to us through preaching, teaching and group study of the Bible. We employ the spiritual disciplines (fasting, solitude, silence, etc.) to grow in our submission to the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. We develop contemplative habits so that we can learn to recognize the voice and movement of the Spirit of God. We allow the Spirit to form Christian virtues and character in us through the disciplines of community, Bible Study, missional living, prayer and worship. We live out the Great Commission of making worshipping disciples on local, national and global levels.

With this in mind, the church is obligated to always worship the Almighty with thanksgiving and praise. This is the goal that we strive for when worshiping at Majority Missionary Baptist Church.

There were two Sunday morning worship services. The early morning service was in the contemporary format. The dress code was ‘come as you are’ but yet remain respectful, this allowed the younger generation to have self-expression in celebrating in a contemporary worship style. The hospitality committee would meet, greet all parishioners to assure that the love of Christian fellowship would be the primary focus. The musical selections were appropriate for contemporary worship genre. The praise team led the devotion and all choral music, which allowed congregational call and response as worship leaders extemporaneously worshiped according to the Holy Spirit. The ordinance of the church remained in traditional format in which the church has been biblically established.

The second service was in the traditional format. There were devotional leaders who sang and prayed the appropriate passages according to church lectionary. The choirs sang hymns, anthems, and spirituals that were appropriate for each Sunday. The sermons were lectionary based and the ordinance of communion, baptism, and the invitation to Christian discipleship was in the traditional format. There was a prayer box to keep everyone informed of the sick, shut-in, and health and welfare. There was also the church’s website that allowed individuals to make prayer request and express other prayer concerns.

For special Sundays each season, the service was observed and we celebrated the annual Christian and political ‘holiday’ calendar to remind the church that we were to set the Christian example for all humanity. Wednesday Bible Study at 12:00 noon, met for one hour. We studied the Bible in the context to become more acquainted with the word of God and Christian conduct. Assignments were issued weekly and the students were responsible for presenting to the class and participating in a question and answer segment. The evening Bible class began at 6:30 p.m. and consisted of children from Pre-K to college and adults. The curriculum was appropriate for

the age level groups and focused on uniformity. After each session, the feeding program committee served a fellowship meal for the entire Bible Study group.

The author has also placed special emphasis upon Christian Education, holding all participants, especially teachers to a very high standard. Our Vision for our Children's Ministry states:

Our Vision for Educational Ministry at Majority Missionary Baptist Church is to minister to the heart of each child, in support of the home, and to instill God's Word into the heart and mind of each of our youth. In so doing, we are each called to be a loving, dedicated and self-sacrificing vessel which the Lord may use. This often calls for self-evaluation, as we must be accountable to God's Word in our own lives, before we can be a Godly example in the lives of others.

Our Mission Statement is: to be effective, we need to always be available to meet the children's needs for counsel, friendship, encouragement, and coaching in their Christian walk. We must make every attempt to know our children thoroughly. Knowing their age/grade characteristics and developmental stages is important information to the teacher in providing the appropriate lesson plan and keeping good discipline in the classroom. We should also concern ourselves with their needs to home, how they are doing at school, what their parents are like… (Saved? Unsaved? etc.). In short, we must make ourselves experts at knowing how to affect these young lives entrusted to our care.

We are tasked with providing quality care for the little ones, and a quality classroom environment to enhance their opportunity to hear God's Word, as well as afford their parents the occasion to attend services in the sanctuary, unhampered by child care responsibilities. The quality of care we give must be an example of Godliness and order in the home.

Policies for Teachers

- Teachers should be at church ten or fifteen minutes prior to their class time to pray and prepare any materials for their class.

- Teacher meetings at least three times per year that require every teacher to be in attendance.
 - Meetings are important for unity of teachers, airing and solving problems
 - Keeping events and curriculums organized and encouraging and inspiring each other.
- Teachers must notify the children's ministry coordinator as soon as possible if you are going on vacation or for any other similar reason
 - You are to call to find a replacement.
 - Contact the children's ministry coordinator and notify him or her, who your replacement is and which dates are affected.

- Should there come a time when you need to withdraw from the ministry, please do not disappear! Let the children know that you need to leave, and if you feel led, give them a simple reason why you are stepping down.
 - One month's notice would be appreciated.

Teaching Responsibilities

- Be prepared
- Arrive early
- Leave your classroom clean
- Find a substitute
- Attend required teacher meetings
- Know your age group

Duties of a Helper (often thought of as a 'behind the scene' position)

- Responsible to be in class approximately ten or fifteen minutes ahead of class time. Assist the teacher in making copies, providing coloring materials, plug in a music tape and start preparing the classroom.
- Greet the parents. They need to know who you are.
- Position yourself at the door of the classroom.
- Check the students in and assign their seats.
- Provide classroom discipline for the children, hush the talkers, suppress distractions from the classroom, the teacher needs their undivided attention.
- Help the children with their various craft projects, as required.
- Help the children with their reading.
- Teach the children to be good listeners.

- Interface with the parents after class.
- Let the parents know how their children are doing in Sunday School. If there is a discipline problem, now is the time to let the parents know. An informed parents will be able to encourage or discipline a child at home.

As a result of effective Christian education, our ministry was blessed to grow and from this worship experience, a MMBC Media Ministry was organized. The purpose of the media ministry was to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that is increasingly technologically and visually driven through the use of state-if-the-art studio and visual technology and the dedication of its volunteers; to produce quality visual material that compliments and reflects the Pastoral vision for Majority Missionary Baptist Church.

Furthermore, the purpose of the MMBC Media Ministry is to promote the auxiliary ministries at Majority Missionary Baptist Church, as well as to conceptualize and create progressive, culturally accurate media that: enhance worship; act as an instrument for evangelism; support discipleship' and serve ministry. This task is accomplished by providing and maintaining an infrastructure that allows the processing of information and by acting as a communication conduit between the staff, church members, our community and the world.

Additionally, a summer youth work program was suggested and developed. Our mission for the summer youth work program was to promote life- long skills and good work ethics in the workplace for children at MMBC and in the community. The Bible teaches us that: "Even children make themselves known by their acts, by whether what they do is pure and right" Proverbs 20:11. Additionally the Bible teaches us in Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." We aspire to teach participants the importance of being responsible and accountable with their finances. To do this, we conducted mandatory classes for both participants and their parents on tithing and budgeting. The Bible

requires that the Christian should start by tithing I his giving. Tithing is the practice of giving one-tenth (10%) of one's income to the Lord.

Here at Majority Missionary Baptist Church, we believe it takes a village to raise a child, and the church to raise the village; and we do that my meeting people at their point of growth. When we consider what God has done for us through Jesus and how He died for us, we ought to give our fair share joyfully and not grudgingly. It is our hope that participants will enjoy their summer as they learn to work, budget, and cheerfully and joyfully give a tenth back to the LORD.

The criteria is as follows:

Requirements:

- Ages 8 – 18
- Orientation with parent/guardian
- Completed Resume
- Medical Background information

Benefits:

- Minimum wage
- Work with church ministries
- Learn work ethics
- Workshop on tithing
- Personal finance
- Work ID card

We believe it takes a village to raise a child, and the church to raise the village; and we do that by meeting people at their point of growth. Our children are encouraged in other programs. We have implemented a scholarship program, an annual oratorical contest and recognition for the children's academic achievement as a means to encourage them that knowledge is power.

The author is a product of urban America, and he understands the importance of children and their role in the community and church. He holds the position, use them or lose them. The danger that plagues not only urban communities but suburbs as well and that is the decline in

church membership because we have failed to express and extend a loving invitation and appreciation for our youth. The author holds, a church without youth is a dying church. At MMBC we believe our children are our greatest gifts. Further, we believe as the Bible teaches, that children are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. With this being said, the author, as pastor, is totally committed to grow our children and not lose them.

Majority believes nothing closes the door more firmly for children than a lack of appreciation for their gifts. Children become vibrant worshipers, resulting in an increase of member retention and also visitor attendance as a result of their excitement with peers. MMBC provides an atmosphere that is highly conducive to spiritual growth through worship and praise. This growth means that the Bible becomes relevant to the daily lives of congregants.

Maintaining a relevant inclusive lectionary for sermon preparation is imperative that integrates biblical truth into the daily lives of our congregation to address the practical issues such as relationships, conflict resolution, temptation, school or the workplace. The author believes Christian growth is based upon biblical literacy. Christian growth means that worship fills the heart of believers as they receive God's love. This spiritual revelation brings about a conversion to the worshipper from within. This conversion transforms the believer by the renewing of their minds to engage in transformative development for the up-building of the kingdom of Christ.

At Majority we have implemented an ongoing development of small groups to facilitate the needs of our congregants by establishing holistic programs to educate the greater urban community. This is achieved through our faith knowing when praises go up, blessings will come down.

Pre-Test and Post Test

Pre-test and post-test allowed for accurate time and data gathering for each session. To achieve this, the author referred to Research and Design by John W. Creswell, "to thoroughly discuss the materials used for the experimental treatment. One group, for example, may participate in a special computer-assisted learning plan used by a teacher in a classroom. This plan might involve handouts, lessons, and special written instructions to help students in this experimental group learn how to study a subject using computers. A pilot test of these materials may also be discussed, as well as any training required to administer the materials in a standard way. The intent of this pilot test is to ensure that materials can be administered without variability to the experimental group."[5] The tests allowed church leaders to better understand the progress of pros, cons, strengths, and weaknesses that needed to be addressed within the context during the six week sessions.

More specifically, the pre-test allowed the administrator the opportunity to use this data to compile the information necessary for teaching the students in the program. It provided the necessary data to assist in the transformative development process in the West Florence community. The post-test was administered in the same manner as the pre-test; however, the post test data analysis reflected on the knowledge gained from the sessions.

Summary and Reflection of Group Discussion for

[5] John W. Creswell, "*Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*" Third Edition, (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE, 2009), 158.

The Book of Exodus

Gathering and Prayer:

Dear God, our Father who art in Heaven, in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, we give thanks to You for the *Book of Exodus* that moves from slavery to worship, from Israel's bondage to Pharaoh to its bonding to Yahweh. We thank you for journey shared concerning your servant Moses as Israel's liberator. We ask Dear Lord, that we too will humbly remove our shoes and realize that we are standing upon holy ground as we strive for the transformation of your people. Amen.

Introduction to the Book of Exodus

Moses the author of Exodus, relates more miracles than any other Old Testament book and is noted for containing the Ten Commandments. Exodus is the story of how the Lord redeemed His people. The Essence of redemption is to be bought back. One of the great pictures of being bought back is in the book of Hosea, who prophesied to a corrupt and idolatrous Israel from his own experience.

Video Segment: (TBD)

Preview:

Direct your attention to what Exodus says about Israel's Liberation .

Summary of video content:

In the *book of Exodus* (Questions and Answers)

- Growth and Bondage in Egypt
- Moses as Embodiment of the Future
- Moses and God: Call and Dialogue
- Curiosity and Call
- The Sending of Moses
- What's in a Name?
- The Plagues
- From Passover to Praise
- Freedom and Faith

Discuss after viewing:

Scripture and Study Manual:

Question: About the Name of God?

The Life of Moses is unique to ***Exodus:***

- Identify issues of his birth:
- After reading invite persons to describe messages they heard. God Call of Moses which is unique to the Book of Exodus.

A list Moses responsibilities in the ***Book of Exodus****:*

1. The Call
2. Moses response to the Call
3. The Burning Bush.
4. Moses and Jethro, his father-in-law.
5. The 40 days Journey back to Egypt.
6. Moses addresses the Israelite Elders.
7. Moses addresses Pharaoh.
8. The Plagues
9. Deliverance from bondage to Freedom

Closing and Prayer:

Prayer concerns. Include these in the closing prayer.

Gathering and Prayer:

Heavenly Father, We thank you for Jesus Christ , our Lord and Savior. We ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to teach us as we strive to understand the Gospel according to Luke. We thank you for Jesus Christ who expresses love and kindness to the sick and those who suffer as He proclaims that the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. We are truly grateful for your providential Word as we strive to gain wisdom to better serve this community and the world at large. In Jesus Name we pray. AMEN.

Introduction to the Book of Luke: The Gospel of Luke is written predominately to Green and Gentile audiences. These civilizations represent culture, wisdom, knowledge and philosophy. But a strengthening in their faith is needed. Therefore, Luke in a complete, orderly, and classical story, "*The most beautiful Book ever written*", shows the glorious beauty and perfection of Jesus, the Ideal Universal Man. In Luke's Gospel the Holy spirit is chosen to reach all nations with the beautiful story of God's love and saving grace. Luke, as well as Matthew, probably relied on Mark's written Gospel as a reference point for much of its information. Luke was not an eye witness to the ministry of Jesus but was acquainted with some who were: James, Paul, Peter. Luke writes with a detailed eye of a historian. Luke is the third and longest Book in the New Testament.

Video Segment:

Preview:

Direct your attention to what Luke tells about Jesus.

Summary of video content:

In the Gospel of Luke Jesus is presented as the prophet, **teacher**, preacher, **teacher,** and healer.

- Luke traces Jesus' family history back as far as Adam to show His origin is universal.
- Luke sets Jesus' life within Judaism of His day when the temple services included sacrifice, and reading of the Torah and law in synagogue.
- Jesus debated and disagreed with the clergy of His day concerning tradition and law.
- Jesus' ministry has background partly from the Prophet Isaiah.
- Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection fulfill the law, the prophets, and the Psalms of Israel.
- Luke sets this Gospel and Acts in the larger political and religious world of the Roman Empire.
- The prophet from Nazareth confronts us with repentance and an offer for forgiveness.

Discuss after viewing:

If you had never heard about Jesus, what did you learn about Him for the first time from the Gospel of Luke? If you had past familiarity with Jesus, what new did you learn?

Scripture and Study Manual:

Read the attached: "The Book of Luke. Reflections of The Theme Verse" while others listen. Anyone feel free to break in, at any time, with opinions or questions.

Question: What is a parable? What is an allegory?

Several parables are unique to Luke:

- Identify several parables and read them aloud:
- After reading invite persons to describe messages they heard. The most famous parables which are unique to the Gospel of Luke are the Good Samaritan, the lost son, and the lost sheep.

A list of the parables in the Gospel of Luke is:

10. Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:30-37.
11. Jesus heals 10 men with leprosy. Only one of them is Samaritan, was grateful Luke 17:12-17).
12. The Kingdom of Heaven is not shut to Samaritans Luke 9:51.
13. The rich man and the beggar Luke 16:19-31.
14. The parable of the lost son(s) Luke 15:11-31.
15. The shrewd manager Luke 16:1-10.
16. Parable of the lost sheep Luke 15:4-7.
17. Parable of the lost coin Luke 15:8-10.

What is the point of each parable?
Which characters in the parables show love?
What do these parables say about the Least, the Last, the Lost?

Point out the occurrence of each of the words least, the Last, and the lost" in the theme verse for today's lesson. Luke 4:18-19. **Hint:** The Least- The shepherds were the least. The Last – Some despised on earth will be honored. The Lost: Those who do not repent face spiritual death.

Break:

Encounter the Word: Scripture selection Luke 16:19-31.

- What is the central idea of this passage??

- What meaning does this passage have for Christians today?
- What do we need to know about this text?
- What does this passage require of me?
- Try to dig deeper to get personal involvement in this passage.
- What did the author have in mind for those to whom the passage was written?

Marks of Discipleship:

Discuss attitudes and stereotypes identified in the statement of "Our Human Condition"

- Invite all to reflect silently on the tension between their protected, comfortable life style and the demands of God's mission to the outcasts.
- Go through the questions in the Study Manual one at a time and then discuss the question: If we put ourselves in the position of the least, the last, and the lost, what do we need from Jesus?

Closing and Prayer:

Prayer concerns. Include these in the closing prayer.

Assessment Survey

The conclusion of the six week sessions allowed the students and the administrator to assess and develop an assessment survey team. The team had the responsibility of following the systematic plan developed to educate other people for theological and social transformation. According to John W. Creswell's book, Research Design, the author used the social constructivists worldview model.

> "Social Constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied."[6]

The author felt it necessary to give a clear and more precise worldview concerning urban ministries and the demographical statistics for accurate reporting. To further this process, the author used the transformative mixed methods procedures from Creswell. "Transformative mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher uses a theoretical lens as an overarching perspective within a design that contains both quantitative and qualitative data. This lens provides a framework for topics of interest, methods for collecting data, and outcomes or changes anticipated by the study. Within this lens could be a data collection method that involves a sequential or a concurrent approach."[7]

The author used the summary on the assessment survey to reveal both strengths and weaknesses. This process revealed accurate updates concerning the principle issues that needed to be re-evaluated. It is necessary to make every effort to avoid any assumption that already have been pre-determined by other sources, internally and externally.

[6] Ibid, 8.

[7] Ibid, 15.

Since one of the goals of social urban ministry is to help congregants and the greater community gain a clearer understanding for theological transformative development for social change in urban ministry resulting in the mobilization to accomplish this goal because it helps them feel empowered.

The author holds that success of any intervention with congregants and families depends on their collaborative efforts, but people who are disenfranchised feel out of control of their own affairs and may not recognize what valuable resources are available to them. The assessment survey points out the available resources in a constructive way that will inform congregants on how to work toward achieving social change.

Questionnaire data was analyzed to determine if participation in the workshop affected participant knowledge, awareness, confidence, and attitude. The post-test six workshop indicators revealed that participants experienced a positive change in knowledge, awareness, confidence, and attitudes. This mobilization for theological transformation for social change in urban ministry influenced the community to engage in productive living, by transforming lives and moving the community closer to a Godly environment where all people will have the knowledge and the ability to engage in transformative living as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Evaluation Form

Date: _____

Workshop Group _____

Facilitator: _____

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements listed below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The objective of the Session was clearly defined.	□	□	□	□	□
2. Group participation and interaction were encouraged.	□	□	□	□	□
3. The topics covered were relevant to our goals.	□	□	□	□	□
4. The content was organized and easy to follow.	□	□	□	□	□
5. The materials distributed were pertinent and useful.	□	□	□	□	□
6. The workshop experience will be useful in obtaining our goals.	□	□	□	□	□
7. The weekly objectives connected to the overall goals.	□	□	□	□	□
8. I will be able to apply the knowledge learned.	□	□	□	□	□
9. The time allotted for the workshop was sufficient.	□	□	□	□	□
10. Adequate time was provided for questions and discussion.	□	□	□	□	□

11. How do you rate the weekly sessions overall?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
□	□	□	□	□

12. What aspects of the workshops could be improved?

13. Other comments?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Formulating a program for Theological Transformation for Urban Ministry is best used when a launch team is organized. Therefore, the launch team consisted of individuals who successfully completed the six week training sessions. These individuals were able to effectively teach the curriculum in the community of faith. Theologically, The Great Commission was the field work of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Thus, this model mirrored The Great Commission as a field assignment for transformative ministries. It was imperative that the team wholeheartedly commit themselves to implementing the principles of Christian living.

The church is the lighthouse in the community that shines as a beacon for those who are looking for direction. Field work should not be restricted to any particular group. The ministry for transformative learning must always be in a universal context for all humanity. Further, field work should be open to different traditions and cultures and pre-suppositional doctrinal perspectives. The launch team was diverse reflecting total universality, also possessing gifts and grace for nurturing people at their point of growth.

To achieve this goal, the author lectured on "Becoming a Fruit Bearing Disciple" concerning the Soil of a Fruit –Bearing Disciple of Jesus from Dr. Terry Thomas' book.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble (I Peter 5:5). 'Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is

the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone assumes the right attitude before God and allows Him as God to do all.' Andrew Murray."[1] The author felt it necessary to implement this concept to assure his congregants that their dedication for ministry must be an act of humility and love. In doing so, the congregants were further informed of the parable in Matthew 13:3-8 where Jesus teaches His disciples the parable of the sower and the four different types of soil.

> "…'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold…"[2]

The author was convinced that this lecture enlightened his congregants to launch forward and begin the field work achieving our mission for transformative development. Team members were tested and approved by their peers to be representatives. Multiple committee members were appointed for effective field work, which included the following: Deacon Jerome Brooks, Sr., Council on Ministry who had the primary task to assure that all committee members worked faithfully within their job descriptions. Minister Herman Burgess, Superintendent of the Sunday School assured that all Sunday School departments were studying the proper curriculum for spiritual enlightenment. Mrs. Modestine Cooper and Mrs. Malana Archie were supervisors of the Christian Education Department.

[1] Terry Thomas, "*Becoming A Fruit-Bearing Disciple".* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Voice of Rehoboth Publishing, 2005), 127.

[2] *New Revised Standard Version*, Copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, Matthew 13:3-8.

After the review of our field work team, the author reassessed the hypothesis and incorporated programs that were relevant to the needs of his congregants for further transformative development for social change and the re-launching of the next phase.

The church sponsored a civil rights tour to Birmingham, and Montgomery, Alabama; Memphis, Tennessee; and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The criteria was based upon the 'Walk It Out' curriculum from slavery to freedom. We linked the Hebrew exodus from Egypt with the Civil Rights Freedom Walk. The outcome resulted in students gaining a clearer understanding of what suffering, redemption and transformative development for social change really means. The author then lectured on the power of faith from Dr. Terry Thomas' book. He focused on 'viewing others with compassion' and 'the power of faith'. "It is impossible to hang around Jesus and not learn to feel the pain of those who are hurting."[3] The author felt it necessary to address, that in suffering there is redemption, by focusing upon the love of Christ who loved unconditionally, even to the point of loving those who despised Him. The congregants learned from the civil rights tour, that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi exercised love and non-violence, and as Disciples of Christ, we too must love one another as Christ loves us. This process was effective for the congregants to re-discover their spiritual gifts for ministry. To achieve social change, the author fully believes that we must minister to the whole person, so holistic ministries were implemented to achieve this goal.

MMBC has established the following ministries: A survey of the field experience led to the production of a DVD which addressed the drugs and crime in the community. This project was a product of the Civil Rights Movement program which brought the development of

[3] Terry Thomas, *"Becoming A Fruit-Bearing Disciple"* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Voice of Rehoboth Publishing, 2005), 84.

transformative thinking. In 2013, a trip was planned 2014 trips to visit the Martin Luther King Monument in Washington, DC and the Holy Land in Orlando, Florida.

Mrs. Lucille Windom supervised the Nurses Aid and Health and Welfare. Mrs. Quilla Rainey served as Director of the Food Bank in association with the Harvest of Hope Food Bank. Also, we received a $21,000 dollar grant for our Kid's Café and have purchased all new computer technology to enhance the learning center for children. Mrs. Christine Mullins is the Director of the Sisters Cancer Awareness Program in association with South Carolina State University. Majority's ministerial staff: Reverend Dr. C.A. McKinney, (retired), Minister Tory White, Minister Allen Moses, Evangelist Debra Giles, Minister Julia Capers, Minister Otis Birk, Minister Earlena Harrison and Reverend Joseph Chestnut, (retired Air Force) are all certified Christian ministers who faithfully engaged in the development training sessions for Theological Transformation for Urban Ministries. The author directed Wednesday night Bible Study.

We used the book by Dr. Terry Thomas, 'Becoming a Fruit Bearing Disciple' for two months. We also used a lecture by Dr. Terry Thomas entitled, 'Mobilizing Your Local Context For Social Change'. From that lecture, the congregants understood that just because the church is located in the urban community does not mean that the church is influencing what happens on that particular block. They began to realize that within the mobilization process, people are motivated to accept the responsibility of seeing needs of the underprivileged, becoming sensitive to their needs and then striving to assist in improving the conditions of the disenfranchised. The class greatly enjoyed the information and the presentation coming from the author, Dr. Thomas.

PROCEDURE

January 7, 2014, Majority Missionary Baptist Church joint board meeting agreed to continue the Theological Transformation for Social Urban Ministries program. The schedule was set for every Wednesday and the launch team along with other interested members attended the workshops. The average attendance was approximately 170 and the energy exceeded the author's initial expectation. The organizational meeting was governed by Robert's Rules of Order, and officers were elected. It was decided that any necessary funding needed to support the program would continue to be provided.

Punctuality and attendance was a mandate to respect all team members' schedules. Six sessions were put in place and the results were phenomenal. The worship experience and music department gave a celebratory atmosphere that was contagious to other members who insisted on enrolling in the next class session. Further, a scholarly Bible Study was birthed from this program and the launch team developed a study guide on the genealogy of Jesus Christ, and Making Fruit Bearing Disciples by Dr. Terry Thomas.

The author was inspired to implement the dream team concept based upon the theological teachings of Joseph as dreamer. From this concept, the author implemented a didactic session consisting of groups of thirteen. Each group is given the opportunity to anonymously write out their dream and place it in a basket. The basket is then passed around the group and the dreams are read and discussion for the group's interpretation of the dream. When the anonymous writer decides to identify themselves, and share with the group; what their dream is all about, the group then prayerfully translate the dream into a vision and the vision into ministry for the dreamer and transformative development. This model has proven to be very effective at Majority, because it

allows everyone, especially introverts, to participate in spiritual growth to rediscover our purpose and calling.

A CD and DVD project entitled "Welcome to the House of the Lord," was developed by the social media ministry. Wi Fi computer technology gave the congregants the connection for streamlining. In March and July of 2014, a visit to the Holy Land in Orlando, Florida and a trip to the Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington, DC, have been scheduled.

As a result of the author's preaching and leadership training from United Theological Seminary, Majority is now ready to launch their building project for Two million ($2,000,000) dollars, and the members are looking forward to the ground breaking ceremony to be held mid spring, 2014 for building a new sanctuary and educational facility located in the West Florence Urban Community.

The author's leadership with the congregants of MMBC has proven to be effective. In each session the pastor and church leaders met with great enthusiasm to gain the theological, philosophical, and psychological formations to implement effective ministry for theological transformation for social urban ministries. To achieve this goal, the Lesson Plan format is as follows:

- Class Objectives: Write out the goals or objectives for class,
- Connection to Goals: Describe how your weekly objectives connect to the overall goals,
- Anticipatory Set: Sometimes referred to as a 'hook'. We used the look, book, hook, took, concept.
- Procedures: List your activities, including any discussion questions and transitions along the way,
- Conclusion: Homework assignments.

- What to do the Next Time: Leave space in the plan to reflect on the lesson and suggest future changes.

The theological formation focused upon the Old Testament scripture Exodus 3:6-10 concerning one; the Call of Moses to be Israel's liberator, and the Israelites deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Reflecting upon history, the congregants were able to see historically a parallel between African Americans and the Israelites social injustice and oppression of enslavement.

After the first session, the class was allowed to have group discussions and later a combined gathering for a question and answering session. From this, the objectives and goals were established for forward movement toward session two.

Session two focused upon the New Testament from Luke 4:14 – 24. The theological, hermeneutical exegesis was presented and the relevant social injustice was paralleled. The major concern was the target audience to whom which the text addressed and the relevant relationship with the disenfranchised in our context.

Session three addressed the historical premises of injustice that still exists and how to adequately formulate solutions to engage for social urban ministry.

Session four focused upon Social and Political Philosophy that addressed multicultural perspectives written by James P. Sterba.

Session five focused upon Post Modern Freedom Fighters, namely: Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa, Desmond Tutu, Samuel DeWitt Proctor, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Session six focused upon the methodology and field work from We Preach Not Ourselves, by Michael P. Knowles, covering 'Affliction and Consolation,'' Human Affliction and Divine

Deliverance', 'Responding to Criticism', 'From God, Divine Initiative'; and 'In Christ We speak' and the great commission of Matthew 28: 19 & 20:

TO MONITOR GROWTH

The author holds to monitor growth for theological transformation, there must be an accurate gauge for leadership, discernment and renewal. As administrator, the author will observe and monitor by keeping a continuous record of the process. This record will reveal the methodology in place that monitors and drives the congregation through every stage of growth. We will make the necessary contextualization changes for growth by reviewing the records that reflect the accurate accomplishments or failures in achieving our expected goals. The following procedures will be implemented monthly:

- Quarterly evaluations
- Objectives
- Strategies
- Activities
- A budget
- Congregational development
- Servant and leadership development
- Networking
- Stewardship
- Inclusive and ecumenical ministries
- New paradigms

The author believes that it is important to empower members to achieve effective ministry. Therefore, the office of the pastor/administrator must provide accurate reports concerning growth. This information is privy to everyone in good standing in the church to achieve our common objectives. The pastor must use every opportunity to promote the model implemented. To maintain effective proactive assimilation, there must be a monitoring system that will target the church's goal for theological transformation for social urban ministry.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

United Theological Seminary has been a tremendous blessing for the author. The courses were very enlightening as well as empowering. As a result, the author feels more confident as a servant of God in making disciples for Jesus Christ. There were times when the author felt as though he would not complete the program because of personal and financial challenges. His faith in God taught him that God will make provisions if we continue to walk by faith and not by sight. This lesson will live with him for the rest of his life. He gained spiritual confidence to trust in God. Also, this experience has enhanced his ability and with the help of the Holy Spirit, his educational goal is coming into fruition.

The author will use this project to continue theological development for social change in urban ministries within the West Florence, South Carolina community and the Baptist Convention to educate our association. There are over one hundred churches in our connectional ministry in the greater Pee Dee Association. Further, the author will present this document to the Educational and Missionary Convention of the State of South Carolina in hopes that our state president will make the recommendation that this document be presented to the National Baptist Convention, USA.

The author's aspiration is to ecumenically and inclusively meet all people at their point of growth to achieve theological transformation for social change, as a faithful servant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX

FLORENCE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Florence County, South Carolina

People Quick Facts	Florence County	South Carolina
Population, 2010	136,885	4,625,364
Population, percent change, 2000 to 2010	8.8%	15.3%
Population, 2000	125,761	4,011,832
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2009	7.4%	6.8%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2009	25.3%	23.7%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2009	13.5%	13.7%
Female persons, percent, 2009	52.9%	51.3%
White persons, percent, 2010 (a)	54.9%	66.2%
Black persons, percent, 2010 (a)	41.3%	27.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2010 (a)	0.3%	0.4%
Asian persons, percent, 2010 (a)	1.2%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2010 (a)	Z	0.1%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2010	1.1%	1.7%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2010 (b)	2.2%	5.1%
White persons not Hispanic, persons, 2010	54.1%	64.1%
Living in same house 1 year ago, pct 1 yr old & over, 2005-2009	83.3%	84.1%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2005-2009	2.4%	4.4%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2005-2009	3.3%	6.2%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2005-2009	80.6%	82.2%

Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2005-2009	20.6%	23.5%
Veterans, 2005-2009	10,142	398,340
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2005-2009	21.5	23.2
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2005-2009	21.5	23.2
Housing units, 2009	55,749	2,084,231
Homeownership rate, 2005-2009	68.5%	70.3%
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2005-2009	14.6%	17.0%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2005-2009	$102,700	$128,400
Households, 2005-2009	49,189	1,693,388
Persons per household, 2005-2009	2.60	2.52
Per capita money income in past 12 months (2009 dollars) 2005-2009	$21,538	$23,196
Median household income, 2009	$39,919	$42,580
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2009	18.4%	17.1%

Business Quick Facts	**Florence County**	**South Carolina**
Private non-farm establishments, 2008	3,300	106,678[1]
Private non-farm employment, 2008	55,687	1,654,414[1]
Private non-farm employment, percent change 2000-2008	-1.2%	3.3%[1]
Non-employer establishments, 2008	7,930	282,855
Total number of firms, 2007	10,447	360,448

Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	19.0%	12.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native owned firms, percent, 2007	S	0.5%
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2002	1.3%	1.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander owned firms, percent, 2007	F	0.1%
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	1.1%	1.7%
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	28.0%	27.6%
Manufacturers' shipments, 2007 ($1000)	2,885,358	93,977,455
Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 ($1000)	1,358,686	40,498,047
Retail sales, 2007 ($1000)	2,237,935	54,298,410
Retail sales per capita, 2007	$16,919	$12,273
Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 ($1000)	250,032	8,383,463
Building permits, 2009	297	15,529
Federal spending, 2008	1,000,421	38,831,638[1]

Geography Quick Facts	**Florence County**	**South Carolina**
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	799.84	30,109.47
Persons per square mile, 2010	171.1	153.6
FIPS Code	041	45

City Council

The City of Florence has a seven member City Council including a part-time Mayor. Three City Council members are elected by district, and three members are elected at large. The City Council and Mayor serve four year terms. The City of Florence is a Council-Manager form of government. Mayor Stephen J. Wukela, Teresa Myers Ervin from District 1, Edward Robinson from District 2, Buddy Brand from District 3.

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